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Founding Editor
Subodh Kumar Sinha

Editor-in-chief Vijay Kumar Roy



World Association of Authors and Researchers

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In memory of

Professor Shankaranand Palit,

a legendary teacher of English at Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar

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Editorial

India was recovering from the first wave of the COVID-19 in February 2021. In April and May the outbreak of the second wave worst hit most of the states and brought before us the horrible situation unheard and unimagined in the history of global pandemic. The turmoil and turbulence of health sector caused distressing silence. It was high time when social values were tested. Traditional medication saw its rise along with a number of preventive measures to save the people from this deadly disease. Television and social media had flood of grim news and gruesome pictures. They made the people believe in the failure of medical system coupled with a surge of illegal and evil practices all for monetary gain. The need and importance of professional ethics and human values came to the fore.

Technological advancement made the world smaller, and accessibility of everything became easier but this pandemic proved everything futile for a particular period. In this entirely disturbed environment paving the way for hope and happiness was very difficult. Publication of this issue of *Akshara* in a world of fears and uncertainties has proved the might of the pen.

As creative and critical writings are not bound by geographical and linguistic boundaries, sometimes similar issues are found in the writings of many writers in different countries and they are of global concern. One of them is nationalism, meant for preservation of one's cultural capital which was deeply affected by colonialism and imperialism. There is also a shift from nationalism to ultranationalism and religious nationalism. These two issues are also viewed in reaction to the globalization. Religious and political dissent arises out of them, but it is ruthlessly suppressed by the regime due to over ambition. It engenders armed conflict where Gandhian values lose their relevance and the scope for happiness in language and action is meant for the select few.

A quest for the meaning of life develops spiritual vision and the approach to oneness but the strong materialistic curtain dims this path and gives rise to social, psychological and economic problems. In this scenario universal values, concerns for environmental pollution, radicalisation and security issues are overlooked. Many of these overriding subjects constitute the part of the articles in this issue besides others. There are also moving poems, reviews of recently published books and an excellent interview.

The experience gained during the recent years would strengthen all to fight the fears of pandemic as well as hatred. Its transformational power would act as a healing agent in the lives of many to restore the lost joy and hope for brighter future.

All the best!

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"The undiscovered continent", "Endless vacuum all around"...: The Poetry of Dayananda Pathak

Nigamananda Das*

Abstract

Dayananda Pathak started writing poetry in English during the late seventies of the twentieth century and has so far published three collections of poetry. He, who considers himself unpoetic, holds his mother as the major influence on his growth and has commented on different contemporary issues of world poetry in prefaces to his collections of poetry. Different stages of his poetic career as a romantic, realist, modernist and postmodernist are clearly distinguishable. Many momentary impressions find depiction in his poetry. Despair, frustration, deception, darkness, silence, injustice, love and essential pain and obsession are some of his recurrent themes. Besides several contemporary issues, he has been a homebound pilgrim in quest for his roots which has been a deep concern in Indian English poetry so far. Translating the religious dramatic poetry of Neo-Vaishnavite saints like Sankardeva and Madhabdeva is a major contribution of Pathak to Indian English poetry.

Keywords: Love, memory, injustice, deception, melancholy, time, mask, uncertainty, undiscovered continent

During the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century, poetry in English in several anthologies and as individual poems were published from different provinces of India. With the publications of Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, A. K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Pritish Nandy, Keki N. Daruwala and the like, this trend of writing poetry was recognised as New Poetry which broke away from the romantic tradition of

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writing and a trend of quest for roots was initiated by the aforementioned new poets and their followers in different parts of India. In the Northeast part of India which seems to be distanced from the mainland, there was no exception and a group of poets who tried writing both in English and Assamese, wrote excellently voicing the realities both in romanticist and modernist strains. During the nineties of the last century from almost all provinces of the Northeast India, collections of poetry in English were published voicing the romantic and realist momentary impressions which were very often rooted in the native soil. These poets realized a need of writing in English to introduce their cultural roots to the world beyond their region and to seek the truth and explicate the complex syntax of self in the mystic lines of their verses. One among those prominent bards of realities is Dayananda Pathak who in his golden voices has upheld the cultural values and scripted the hard realities of life. Pathak started writing poems in English during the late seventies of the last century and his first collection of poems titled Coral Island was ready for publication in 1980, but due to some personal constraints, the publication was delayed up to 1998. He has published two more collections after that, i.e., The Golden Deer (2007) and Between Fire and Snow (2010). Through these three collections of his poetry and translations of the dramatic poetry of the two greatest Vaishnavite saints of Assam, Sankardeva and Madhabdeva, he has built a world of grace and felicity of feelings and emotions which prominent poets have done to the world of poetic illustriousness. In three of his poetry collections he has shared his views on his formative forces and feelings towards the creative world which has prompted some of his reactions towards the contemporary generation. He considers his mother's influence on his life/poetic career as supreme: "It however goes without saying that my mother's impact on my life stands supreme. Every moment, I feel, I have some umbilical linkage to her thought frequency and modes of expressions" ("Personal", Between Fire 6). Even he calls these poems as expressions of some of his private moments and goes on to say that these expressions may not be called poetry (loc. cit. 6). In three of his poetry collections, he has written prefaces giving some details about his craft of writing, themes and contemporary poetry in general which give the readers and researchers some information about the time and art of writing poetry in English. He has categorised his writing, and himself as a poet which shows his humility, though over the years he has made efforts towards several forms of writing in English besides poetry, as English is accepted as one of the languages of India. He says in this connection that it is no longer alien to us and as an international language it has an honourable position in our intellectual and literary world. Hence bi/trilingualism has a better advantage for self-expression ("Preface", Coral Island iii). He considers himself as a poet "either by accident or by chance" and "a toddler in the field" (loc. cit. iii). Again he says "Poetry has never been my usual cup of tea... it is only a momentary flash" ("Foreword", Golden Deer iv). He calls himself 'unfortunate' (loc. cit. iv) though his poetry has been a significant contribution to the multi-ethnic writing in English from Northeast India. He has been a romantic, modernist and postmodernist in his attempt at writing reflecting various momentary expressions and has favoured the simplicity of expression which the poets should always prefer. Poetry should not be meant for a few only. He has mildly criticized the

contemporary poetry for the difficult trend in its allusions, jargons, montages, ambiguities and stylistic devices which make it unusually unconvincing for the common men. He emphasizes that all poetry should appeal to all types of readers.

A poet must comment on the poetic sensibility and prescribe the attributes of great poetry. Pathak has commented on the great poets and the prevailing situations of the era which has pained him. He says, "It is true one may have poetic feelings in abundance without being a poet" ("Foreword", *Golden Deer* iv). About the craft of writing and style, he goes on to say:

Great poets are those who have been able to combine within them the poetic sensations and the chemistry of formatting those sensations in perfect balance. The art of formatting the poetic sensibilities differs from poet to poet, age to age, and situation to situation. Our prevailing tragedy is that we are living in an age that has buried all our human feelings and tender sensibilities, yielding place to the market economy. Often we have the feeling that we are in search of something that is quite irrelevant in the prevailing context. The people at large ignore the poetic utterances. People's craze for journalistic jargons and media hypes brushed aside the genuine poetic feelings emanating from the poetic hearts. It is also equally true that poetic utterances are natural responses in us under adverse and unfriendly situations (*loc. cit.* iv-v).

Though Pathak's major concern as a poet is that poets need to be understood by all kinds of readers, he feels that a poet as a social chronicler must record the changes of the time and throbs of the people's hearts. Regarding the responsibility and thematic concerns of the poets, he observes:

We admit, today's complex and variegated experiences along with the stresses received by the sensible and conscientious poets incarcerate them to a new set of values which finally influence their modes of verbal expressions. Under the situations our poets, while expressing themselves, find themselves amidst different esoteric allusions, metaphors, imagery, symbols, linguistic and folkloristic wealths stretching almost every area of human experiences and intellectual upbringing. Growth of science and technology coupled with phenomenal expansion of mass communication, geographical barriers are virtually blotted out from the mental map of the sensible poets and authors aiming high beyond their national frontiers. Today's poets have seen the dissolution and devastation of our socio-ethical and politico- economic values. Even in our own country parliamentary democracy has raised eyebrows of the responsible citizenry. Social justice has been made a mockery by the people entrusted with the safeguard of the constitution. Similarly, communism in the erstwhile USSR and the East European countries is nullified. Economic colonialism has occupied the place hitherto occupied by political colonialism. Due to free economy multinational companies, like the colossus, are in the process of grabbing everything in our volatile society.... Our contemporary poets and literati are in the whirlwind of such rapid changes taking place all around ("Preface", Coral Island i-ii).

Dayananda Pathak has been both a crusader of truth and bare realities of his time. His first collection of poems titled *Coral Island* contains his poems composed during the preceding two decades from 1998. The collection which contains some of his best poems explores his poetic soulscape in revealing his myriad momentary impressions on life's varied situations. Melancholy is one of the prominent characteristics of the poems of this collection. But unlike most of the romantics, Pathak is not an escapist (Sarmah 119). The note of despair accompanied by pessimism, injustice, love, death, darkness, shadow, silence and some symbols like 'mask' pervade the whole gamut of his poetry. The poems in different times highlight different attitudes to life. There are several symbols, similes and metaphors used at different poems. But maximum of the poems deliberate on the problems of contemporary life and momentary impressions on the things in our environment. The title poem of the first collection reflects on the time:

Ours is a Time, where every decade a dark room, every house a dingy den with desiccated plant in the garden front I bask in fraud you call art.
You may not recognise me-I am wearing a mask, covering my pestered face from public view ("Coral Island", lines 14-24).

Deception is an essential experience in our life. Our "history is a gory tale" ("Coral Island" 8), hence 'society' stands blocked (*loc. cit.* 5). The whole history is full of so-called 'heroes', but 'myth' has been a 'farce' and 'a colossal waste' (*loc. cit.* 12). He seems ambiguous in poems like "Holiday From Love" (2), "Battle Against Self" (3-4) and "You Are Angel No More" (9) in terms of his attitude to love. Many activities in our day-to-day life have been self-destructive (i.e., battle against self) in way of 'history's rise and fall' (3) and as we have been 'wearing' layers of masks (3) disguising our true selves. Hence his persona feels the necessity of a philosophy and fertile understanding to control the chaos:

A new philosophy is the need, a new grammar, a dictionary, a new sword, and inspired words for this battle against self ("Battle Against Self" 34-37).

Uncertainty has been the hallmark of modern life. In his poem "At Thirty" (5), he highlights the 'uncertainty' with the words "what next?" (5) personifying 'Time' which he considers as the eternal leveller. Ambition and success yield no eternal result, the "balance sheet of life / shows the downward curve / with gross profit / and net

loss in the final turnover" (11-14), and hence pain is the ultimate reality in life. The poetry of the first two decades of Pathak's poetic career is philosophical and spiritual, which though shows a deep romantic strain, is of course very realistic. As a modernist also he depicts the wasteland surrounding him full of nostalgia, degeneration, phantasmagoria of futility, where he envisions a death amidst the greenery of life. He does not find the way as to how to define the eternally powerful 'Time' and looks forward to the waves of pain:

there lies an unending way stretching before and after where my lone soul lashed by century's pain kissed by thousand deaths stands midway amidst December pain.... shrouds my being and my estranged soul ("Time" 5-15).

He finds an Eliotian wasteland in his surrounding world and is deeply obsessed with the scenario of futility. Life has become "a lonely naked shell/ thrown on the oceanbeach" ("Naked Shell" 17-18), and old age and lethargy have pervaded the world and hence the obsessive persona is in deep depression:

I am old, dying to sleep...
There you will see
and hear my groans
my destiny, my nation,
my music, my rhythm ("Naked Shell" 8-14).

In spite of the all pervading gloom, his obsessive soul dreams of peace, which he feels, can only come through the pain, in the "stillness of the night" (2) with the strange symphony of silence ("Peace Gently Percolates").

Pathak has commented on some of his personal moments and memories and philosophized them and their association with his life. This practice is common with most of the poets as this is a universal phenomenon to philosophize what is very often happening to us. Sometimes some elegiac notes make us deeply nostalgic as is shown in the following words:

O God, if you exist at all, kill this mind this thinktank.

Make me a spirit, an appetite of evolution, a kinetic energy, a shivering electron,

that being one with my dear allow me to draw a better world. ("Being One With You" 13-21)

A poet has his own ideal world. He dreams of his utopia, designs his own ecotopia and feels at home in depicting his moral ecotopia which he may call 'Globe' and give credit to those who helped in designing his ecotopia. Hence the persona says:

I have larger promises, ideas, quest for subtler excellence; Desirous of redesigning the globe bought from the uncle's shop after my heart's creative call... putting an end to mushroom growth over a barren land My grandfather bought me a sword and a pen to play with Besides, I have my own words, the weapon to fight with and to redesign the rickety globe my father bought me in my birthday years past ("Globe" 6-26).

The weapons for his moral and intellectual exercises were gifted to him by his grandfather and father. So for his heart's creative call he gives credit to them. This is a poet's indebtedness to his ancestry. His reactions to the contemporary barren world are assertive, but about the solutions he is ambiguous. That is a long quest; nobody knows where to lead:

We are born flowers, pure and holy. Life makes us stones, rugged and rude.... after history's cruel sedimentation? ("Diamond" 1-12)

Obsessed of the inequality, injustice and ultimate frustration, he realizes the difficulties, prevalence of aimlessness and feels pondering over them for solace/solution:

Plateful of injustice, my daily feed, I munch and digest. There is none better in the market complex around me for a fresh relish.

Cupful of ignominy my daily drink

I live on them and thrive. ("Feed" 1-11)

In the early poetry of Pathak, use of some western myths is noticed. The first collection titled *Coral Island* was symbolic of his romantic moorings and frustration towards insoluble problems of life. Hence *Coral Island* is a symbolic quest for eternal sufferings amidst all struggles of life.

In his second collection of poetry, *The Golden Deer* (2007), he has been more focussed on his homeland and roots. The second collection celebrates his personal loss and memories of grandfather and great grand fathers, death of mother and his emotional exploration of her graces and celebration of history of the land of his birth and historical remains and glories of Hajo, Pragjyotishpura, the abandoned pond and his favourite Haladharkai, and several changes in his surroundings. The golden deer is a myth symbolizing illusion. He focuses on the realities which are illusory and essentially pleads for his theory of mask, and that everything in this unreal world is masked. They hold different essence than they appear to be. In his poem titled "My Face-My Mask" (24), he says, "Every morning I am to wear a mask / I know, you cannot tolerate a real face" (17-18). Again he repeats, "My happiness, my visage, / My promises, my words tender/ I know the art of wearing tears" (8-10), which are the bare realities of our lives. He has been aphoristic in several lines of his poems like:

Past is history
Future is mystery
A thorn beneath the sea
One hardly knows
When it would pinch the soul. ("Time flame" 5-9)

Along with local traditions and pinching provocations, he has used several local terms untranslatable into English like *bora* rice, *dhenki*, *kalanal*, *hat*, *namghar*, *bihu*, and *bihua* as a mark of his quest for roots.

His poems like "Mother- Parting at Night", "Lagoon at Fire", "Companion" and "Abandoned Pond" come under the category of family poems which besides other issues reflect on personal emotions and incidents of life which are both personal and universal in their appeals. These poems also voice aphoristic morals like "Loneliness is your companion" ("Companion" 33), "Here Time is timeless" ("Lagoon of Fire" 55), "You are element disposable" ("Lagoon of Fire" 41) and "To a new world / That is brave without its fret" ("Mother- Parting at Night", 56-57). Modernist voices are also utopian blending imaginary with real. In his poem "Obituary on the Death of a Civilization", the disillusionment emits smoke from the expressions like, "Love is now a withered leaf // "Friends sing like / Doves, basking in Sunshine / And fly off at the

footstep / of Marauding darkness / To destination unseen / Sons slam the door / Many fathers shriek. / The mother waits for the son / At night, till the dawn. / He does not return / He shouts from the jungle deep, /I'm a patriot/ Filial bond is out of my lexicon-" (5-18). Erosion of values, self-determination, hopelessness, disillusionment, cynicism and degeneration of sacred relationships, have been recurrent practices of modern times. In the poem titled "Pilgrimage to Hell", the debate on robbing the rich and robbing the poor becomes prominent. Killing is not considered crime as "Killing is lesser evil / Compared to your moral merchandise" (55-56). The professions have been perverted and nobody can live by being truthful as:

Truth is so brittle, fragile...

Truth is like newly-wed bride

That provokes gluttonous eyes, ("Pilgrimage to Hell" 65-91).

In poems like "Hajo Revisited" and "City of Colour," history, myths, and legends have been juxtaposed into magical realisms, and the places have become mute witnesses of glorious traditions and have been retelling their own past.

The third collection titled *Between Fire and Snow* (2010) contains poems of observation; these poems are more of the poems or entities of 'undiscovered' continent ("Hungry Angels" 23). Here the readers can find possibilities and entities with indeterminacy in meanings. One can take the meaning the way one finds it or one can go deep into the things and interpret the existentialist possibilities. From the poem titled "Marriage of Trees" to "Coconut Trees" or "Blood Vendor", one can observe the details given in different poems. There are many aspects to observe on each and everything in our surroundings. These aspects are the essences to be pondered over and such depictions reveal their history. If we want to give them some importance, it is their history to be narrated which makes them mythopoeic. Every ordinary entity has mythopoeia behind it, hence the poems in this collection can be explicated through their content with a moral, the way each and every poem has a thematic; e.g., in the poem "Playful Dog", the young girl who is shy, is always busy with her dog. She loves animals and hates man, because, "Man, she says, is a fearful animal." ("Playful Dog" 30). Similarly all other poems hold morals according to their thematics.

Pathak has translated the plays of Sankardeva and Madhabdeva into English and thereby contributed to religious dramatic poetry, both in lucid poetic lines and prosepoems in two volumes. After his third collection of original poetry in English, he has devoted his time to contribute to devotional poems of various *rasa*s as narrated by both the Vaishnavite saints of Assam by translating their poetic plays into English. He has translated the six plays of Sankardeva all eulogizing the divine games of the incarnations of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. These translated plays in poetic and prose-poetic verses have introduced to the religious world the pure devotional poetry etched by the poet-saint Sankardeva and thereby introducing Sankardeva to the whole world. The translated poems are very simple in diction and style and are very easily intelligible to all. Hence Pathak pleads for simplicity in poetry so that the poets will be understood by all easily. The following lines from Sankardeva's play titled *Kali Daman* shows their universal appeal:

O Hari Hari Gopal

We are face to face with death

We are being burnt by the wild fire

Save us, O Lord, save us

For the loss of our lives

O Lord, We don't pine for that

We pine not for our lives

But for not being able to see you before us

So, our Lord, we are pained

For that thought.

So, before we die let us see you

Once again, our hopes will

Then be fulfilled.

Sankara says- Lord is the only savior...

(Playwright-Preacher Sankardeva: His Plays 1-14).

Similarly in *Madhabdeva and his plays*, Pathak has translated nine plays of Madhabdeva and has made lucid English rendering of the divine dramatic verses of Madhabdeva for his devotees all around the world. The following lines from *Arjuna Bhanjan Yatra* expose the devotee's desire to remain associated with the holy feet of the Lord for his salvation:

O my Lord, show me the favour

I'm not going to leave aside your holy feet

You are the essence of this creation,

You do incarnate only to lighten sinful weight for the

world

Let me be devoted to your lotus feet,

Remove all my mundane desires

And keep my mind attached to your holy name

Let my mind remain firmly attached to chanting of your holy name.

Let my mind remain safe and stable

And allow me to keep attached to your feet...

(Madhabdeva and his plays 1-12).

The Lord's mysterious games as narrated by Madhabdeva are again rendered into English by Pathak in the play titled *Pimpora Gusowa* as:

Gobinda plays with mother Yasoda

And shows his human behaviour

He is the cause behind creations

Sustenance and destruction thereafter-Nobody can ever understand his ways-That Lord for the pleasure and happiness Of the people has come to play Amongst us as the son of a cowherd-He is the Almighty amongst the Gods-The giver of redemption-Now plays in different ways amongst us-Madhaba narrates all that... (Madhabdeva and his plays 1-12).

Pathak's translation of divine verses from Sankardeva and Madhabdeva is an act of his quest for roots. His translations have been famous in different parts of the world and the plays have been enacted abroad. The poetic renderings of the holy plays of Sankardeva and Madhabdeva are genuinely rich contribution to Indian English poetry as many other saint writings have been translated by many Indian / Western scholars. Dayananda Pathak's poetry in English and his translations of the sacred dramatic poetry of Sankardeva and Madhabdeva into English are rich contributions to Indian English poetry from Assam. In all of his original English poetry collections he has commented on his own poetry and expressed diffidence for not having fluency and spontaneity in feelings. He may not be a born poet like Sankardeva, but he has not failed in being a poet and in raising genuine issues and voicing the essential lore of time. He is deeply rooted in his soil and has tried his best to uphold genuine socioeconomic-cultural and historical and political issues of the region. As a poet, he is very much aware of his role as a sentinel of socio-cultural changes and guardian of ethical values. His comments on his own poetry reveal his honesty and humility. He may not be mellifluous in his poetic utterances, but his intellectual and phenomenological depth is sound and profound and is comparable to any other great poet.

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Poetizing War, Educating the Mind, Warring with the Soul in Selected Nigerian Civil War Poetry

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Abstract

The Nigerian Civil War has been affirmed in extant scholarly quarters the singular event which has elicited the most robust literary harvest in the entire African literary imagination. Poetry, the most cryptic and the most elevated of the genres of literature is a ready tool in moments of urgent literary activism such as war. Quite a few Nigerian writers, therefore, took recourse to poetry in the bid to delineate war experience. This research critically engages the war poetry of T. C. Nwosu and Akomaye Oko, two avant-garde poets who have received little critical attention unlike their counterparts in the same vein. The study uncovers how the poets war with their soul in moments of dire circumstances and anguish to thresh out philosophic harvests through their ruminations on the war. With the agency of qualitative analysis, the research underpins the duality of all phenomena, particularly war as ingrained in the poems. The inquiry suggests that though war is to be cauterized, terrible beauty may be distilled from the same. This is manifest in perseverance, inventiveness, robust effusions, and the mind's education all of which result from war.

Keywords: Poetry, civil war, poetizing war, warring with the soul, Nigeria-Biafra war, insight, expressiveness

Introduction

This scholarship obviously lends itself open to such posers as, what is poetry? What is war? How do we poetize war and war with the soul? What and where (in any event)

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is the soul? We do not pretend to possess unassailable answers to these posers. We only intend to make genuine and (hopefully) insightful attempts at, at least a description of these concepts as justification for the analyses that will follow. It is our conviction however, that a descriptive scholarship (at least) in this regard will account for what a corpus of established theorists and critics in this vein see as the components of the essential document. Therefore, we will determine especially the term "poetry" from different perspectives, not in terms absolute.

Poetry, War, Poetizing, and the Soul

Oscar Wilde is probably right when he asserts that the poet was first a critic before he became a creator (375). Homer was obviously in Wilde's mind, or rather inspired Oscar's ruminations for, Homer's theory of poetry which results in The *Illiad* and The *Odyssey* formed the basis for Plato's cynical rhetoric and poetic theory in *The Republic*. Plato's major quarrel with poetry inheres in its mimetic imbuement which he sees as a denigration of metaphysical dimensions propelled by the divinities where the poet may only be a conduit pipe, rendering high poetic lay by rote (x).

Thus, Plato's mimetic theory purely denigrates poesy of which reason is that it makes the best of men childish and effeminate since they become passionate and expressive; therefore, in Plato's legislative estimation, banal. Charles Kaplan and William D. Anderson note that Plato's poetic philosophy is "an idealistic search for the metaphysical truth", which makes him to see poetry "not only in its relation to the republic (of his imagination) but also as part of that universe" (1).

However, what Plato finds as weakness is shown as strength by virtually all his successors – Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Percy B. Shelley, William Wordsworth, William Coleridge, Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, and Matthew Arnold. And placing a magisterial stamp on all these are the immortal Shakespeare's effusive, robust and therapeutic poetry and drama which fore close any further negative view of poetry on points of its mimetic quality. Aristotle's *Poetics* shows that the mimetic quality of poetry proves that it contains some higher kind of truth than say, history or even philosophy is capable of Poetry, Aristotle further shows, can paint life better or worse through laughing at life's foibles, thereby engendering higher truths (34-37).

The above point is probably at John Keats's mind when, praising the quality of truth paraded by poetry, he quips: "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of imagination: what the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth" (Keats 280-85). This beautifies poetry as an imaginative enterprise which works in the veins of the universe by copying often in much more beautiful ways than naturally obtains.

Where Plato cries up the use of embellishments – flowery language – to garnish poetry as deceitful, Aristotle rightly corrects that teacher/legislator by suggesting the utilitarian quality of such garnishing, positing that those who would make the best poems are only they who make the most metaphor (37). Pointedly, Aristotle proves

that poetry essentially is like painting, using words. This is why in formalist thinking, the content or message is always subordinated to the manner, that is, language and style, of the poet's designs (Selden et al. 117).

Poetry imitates life. This imitation perfected through habit, is produced through the agency of rhythm, language and harmony. Imitation is an ennobling art because it is innate in man. Man is the most imitative of all creatures, and s/he gains all knowledge through imitation. On all scores, Aristotle posits that imitation is either a happy gift of nature or a stricture of madness (39). So, poetry does not relate to what has happened but what may happen. This is what imbues poetry with universality for, "what is possible is credible" (39).

Longinus (49) sees poetry as sublime, a "note that rings from a great mind", even as it is "always an eminence and excellence in language." This note that rings is music; so, poetry is music! And if it flows from a great mind, then poetry is natural: A note represents the sounds and its ringing represents the poetry. However, this does not mean that the expressive in Longinus's calculation is by rote as Plato posits. To Longinus, this note will be propelled by emotion, seasoned by experience and balanced with great ideas. It is all these ingredients of poetry that will "produce the marvelous, provide the power to amaze and this is not meant necessarily to persuade but to carry you along and to please you" (51).

Alexander Pope's observation that "those rules of the ancients are nature still but nature methodized" (189) underscores in the main, the Longinus's thesis that nature, art, and inspiration combine to produce poetry. For the English Romantics, poetry is basically expressive and this expressiveness is the out-pouring of what is inside, akin to the biblical "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." This inspires Wordsworth's position that poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (242-49). This overflow results from deep meditation on the part of the poet which has habituated in him over a period of time and can now overflow.

For this beautiful outburst to reach levels of transport where "the understanding of the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and the affections strengthened and purified," the feelings of that weaver of great tapes try must be connected with important subjects, till at length, "if (he) be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, (he) shall describe objects, and utter sentiments (that will conduce to beauty and the edification of the reader" (Kaplan and Anderson 234).

Wordsworth further observes that the poet sings songs which everyone else joins him to sing and is therefore happy to sing on account of the presence of eternal truth in what is sung; for, "poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge" since the poet "looks before and after" (249). Matthew Arnold in "The Study of Poetry" comes closest to the vein under which we underscore the impetus for our choice of subject and raw material in this project. Arnold's "touchstone" blueprint for poetry sees the subject as "a criticism of life" (334-37). This implies that the poet will first partake of

life, observe it, meditate on it, get affected by, and affect life, then critique it. Arnold suggests that this criticism will only succeed depending on the intensity of the expression in relation to what is expressed: "...and the criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half sound, true rather than untrue or half true" (335).

Obviously, Arnold recommends poetizing the universe for the exploration of its dark, dreary and less obvious recesses to better the lot of mankind. Life's experiences have to be poetized for the intrinsic qualities of truth and philosophic grounds which eminent, sublime poetry imbues. This leads to the question, what does it mean to "poetize?" In this exhibition, to poetize means "to compose poetry," "to make poetry," and to speak or make in terms of *sublime*. Poetry so made is evidently not mere versification. It is that with those qualities and excellences that Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Sidney, Pope, Wordsworth, Pater and the rest, talk glowingly about. There certainly are manners, methods and material that qualify for the sublime, for elevated thought; obviously known to the select few, the literati cult who legislate and it becomes a given. Which in turn is why Horace elects to play the role of the whetstone "which is good enough to put an edge on iron but is out of luck when it comes to cutting" (91).

In a nutshell, poetizing involves representation of great ideas, experiences and powerful feelings in a poetic manner, a manner worthy of poetry (Collins). It is 'war' in this respect that we are poetizing. What then is 'war'?

War can be seen as a problem needing solution, an anachronism fit to be jettisoned, a crime compelling punishment, an up-ender of the best of human behaviour, a means of confronting evil, a potentially interesting adventure (Dixon and Sarkees 2-4). Carl von Clausewitz states that "when whole communities go to war – whole peoples, and especially civilized peoples – the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object," contending that "war therefore, is an act of policy" (83). As John Locke puts it, "the state of war is a state of enmity and destruction" (14-15).

Dixon and Sarkees have cried up the notion that "war is waged by sovereign states and that any other violence is not real war" (3). However, Halleck's treatise on the notion of war has carpeted such a notion of war on the grounds that war is "a contest between states, or parts of states, carried on by force" (150). This view is amply supported by Orend as cited in Dixon and Sarkees who suggest that "war is a phenomenon which occurs only between political communities, defined as those entities which either are states or intended to become states." This latter definition well suits the Nigeria-Biafra War (The Nigerian Civil War) which experience gave rise to the poetic effusions that form our primary content/data in this endeavour. In all, war embodies an organized and often prolonged conflict that is carried out by states or non state actors, generally characterized by extreme violence, social disruption, and economic destruction (Clausewitz 98). In 2003, Nobel laureate Richard E. Smalley identified war as the sixth biggest problem facing humanity for the next fifty years (web).

Since we have all along educated the mind on the content and formal imbuement/ endowments of poetry, how then do we 'war' with the soul given the definitions of war, poetry, poetizing? Indeed, what and where is the soul? Many religious, psychological, and mythological traditions see the soul as the incorporeal and in many conceptions, immortal essence of a person, living thing, or object. In its most poetic exhibition, this definition will have us sort out the essential soul of Longinus in his *On the Sublime*, that of Wordsworth and Coleridge in the *Lyrical Ballads*, that of Shakespeare in his numerous poems and plays but here singularly in his sonnet "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" and the immortal Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*.

Abrahamic religions in most of their manifestations regard souls, or at least "immortal souls" as capable of union with the divine, and this tags with the Hindu and Bhudhist concept of the *Brahman* and the *Atma*. Thus, the soul is that spiritual part of a person believed to give life and in many religions, lives forever. The soul as "the animating principle, or actuating cause of an individual's life" (Bar-Yam 4) proves to be the original, eternal Man, without which there is no humanity. Thus, Bar-Yam further posits that "the soul represents the existence of a human being independent of the materials of which he or she is made" (4).

This obviously is why it is dubbed "A person's total life". That means that soul is man's inner core, the man-writ-large, or the man-essence. Since the soul is said to be a moving spirit, its particle that connects the most with the subject at issue is that which defines soul as "a person's deeply felt mortal and emotional nature, and the ability of a person to feel kindness and sympathy for others, to appreciate beauty, art, (pain, suffering, anguish) etc" (web). The above definition tags with the Blakean vision which stipulates that the body and the soul are inseparable. In Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the poet claims that it is erroneous to suggest that "Man has two real existing principles viz: a Body and a Soul." On the contrary, "Man has no body distinct from his Soul for that / call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five / Senses, the chief inlets of Soul... ("The Voice of the Devil").

We align ourselves (at least for the purpose of this explication) with the Blakean vision on the subject. For, the body feels before that inner core reacts, pouring out the emotions of pity, fear, love, beauty and whatever. Energy galvanizes the soul for, "Energy", Blake further enthuses, "is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy," and this proves that "Energy is Eternal Delight" ("The Voice of the Devil").

Energy could be emotive. It is expressive. It is poetic. It comes from acts of genius and it is equally experiential. Energy imbues great ideas, seasoned by gradually internalized experiences and where it occupies the mind of a genius it results in those eternal excellences that afford a new vista each time we confront it. Energy is the soul and the soul is energy. Both intermingle and produce sublimities with the power to amaze, with a leaning to the marvelous, to poetry. In this vein, therefore, do we war with the soul; and in this exhibition do our select poets war with the soul: That "The great poet is often a (soulful) seer, seeing less with the eyes of the body than he does

with the eyes of the soul, but that he is a true singer also building his song out of the music of life" (Wilde 379).

The incident that proves our select poet's raw material to "war" with the soul is the Nigeria-Biafra war, euphemistically labelled The Nigerian Civil War. By poetizing the war, the poets or poets-personae war with the soul and we do not hear but overhear them. Mostly, the poet speaks to himself, since a poet is largely, a soliloquizer. Being that the war was a painful experience, in fact a tragic and mournful experience, it calls for very sober reflection by our poets who must necessarily emit levels of anguish and sometimes even admiration while they poetize.

Therefore, we have one kind of soul warriors in this discourse and they are the soul warriors who poetize war because they were affected directly and indirectly by the vagaries of the war. They decry the in humanity of the war: the perceived carnage, the terrors of the air raids, the enervating effect of the economic blockade, the inconveniences, the personal introspections on the nature of the war, of wars, and the consequent cry against the injustice and the all pervasive effect of that "not just our war" (Clark 84).

Poets and Poetry of the Nigerian Civil War

War elicits various reactions from writers, often depending on the point of view of concern. Even as a kind of conflict that poses the greatest danger to humanity, war parades terrible beauty and is often delineated as such. James Campbell's reading of 'mainstream' criticism of the First (and by extension the Second) World War(s) poetry yields the surmise that the criticism has ended up replicating that body of poetry s ideology, "an aesthetic criterion of realism and an ethical criterion of humanism of passivity" (203). He further claims that the poets as well as the critics combine both criteria to create an ideology of *combat gnosticism*, "the belief that combat represents a qualitatively separate order of experience that is difficult if not impossible to communicate to any who have not undergone an identical experience" (204). Thus, though some of the finest poets of the two World Wars portray war from a variety of angles, a critical distillation of the thematic cum formalistic bent of the body of poetry tilts toward the aforesaid divides. The publication of anti-war poetry in the second and third decades of the twentieth century in Europe heightened the anti-war protest which began in America with Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* – a novel.

The European and American anti-war posture and a bit of pandering to aesthetics in poetry is distillable from majority of the poetry of the Nigerian Civil War. Akachi Ezeigbo notes that Nigerian artists had their own personal perception of the civil war and this influenced largely their delineation of the war (86). Ezeigbo concedes that the poet writing on the war deploys to good effect, the tropes of satire, irony, allegory, symbolism, metaphor, and humour, etc in the bid to explore the chosen themes. But then, a propagandist leaning is often obvious in the poetry:

Sometimes the methods used could be strident and forceful as in Soyinka s prison poetry, or casual, unobtrusive, full of under statements and yet very

effective as in Achebe s and Okara s war-inspired poetry in *Beware Soul Brother* and *The Fisherman's Invocation* respectively... "emphasis is laid on human condition and the ultimate goal is to uphold an anti-war position" (Ezeigbo 87).

Ezeigbo's surmise is that much of the poetry of the civil war may aptly be labelled 'humane propaganda' in the sense that they hold dear, civilized human ethos and mores as exemplified in Soyinka's poem, "Flowers for My Land."

Joshua Schuster suggests that the most engaging poets engage to develop creative counter strategies out of war – "The poetry that seems most prescient...is work that sucks the aesthetics out of war" (1). This means that though war poetry may contain propaganda, the aesthetic qualities of beautiful war poetry still counts quite some. As Chidi Amuta points out, due to the enormity of pressure that war places on humanity, it provides a fertile ground for the fructification of the "literary imagination" (86). Ogaga Okuyade rationalizes the largely anti-war stance of the poets and poetry of the civil war on grounds of the moment, emotion and situation that gave vent to the poetic effusions:

Being an expression of thoughts and feelings as well as a representation of their vision of the war, their poetry invariably responds to the 'nowness' of the situation. Furthermore, it evinces the inexhaustible possibilities of Nigerian poetry. Though much of the poetry...is lamentatory and ...read like a jeremiad, the poets capture the conflict and are able to appropriate "the voice of the people and the full burden of their memory" (130).

Christopher Okigbo's pre-war poetry presages the war as it foretells the looming danger and ruminates over "foresees the poet's own impending death in the would-be conflagration since he will inevitably refuse to "shut (his) mouth" but rather "go to hell/...with (his) iron bell" as the stubborn "town crier" who is impelled by the muse of prophecy (Okigbo 63). Ogaga Okuyade (130), Obi Nwakanma (229-241), Olu Obafemi (26-30), and J. O. J Nwachukwu-Agbada (104) all agree that Okigbo's "Path of Thunder" is both inaugural and prophetic of the eventuality of the Nigerian Civil War even though it was written two years before the actual conflict commenced. Thus, whereas Okuyade observes that Okigbo's "Path of Thunder" "maps the topography of the war while the succeeding generation of poets broadened the horizon" (130), Obafemi emphatically claims that "Months before it came, Okigbo prophesied the Nigerian Civil War in "Come Thunder" written in January 1966" (29). It was the civil war that dragged Okigbo out of his highly introspective and individualist muse to express the fate of an entire community where he now describes "popular feelings and aspiration in the idiom of the people" (Obafemi 30). As Okuyade puts it, "In Okigbo's "Path of Thunder," something melancholic looms against the background of shadows and apocalypses, a prophecy of the end of an historic(sic) epoch" (130).

Contrarily, Obafemi (30) and Ezugu (195) show that unlike Okigbo whose literary artistry is affected by commitment to the cause of war, "J. P. Clark is able to maintain artistic distance in his poetic ruminations on the war. Clark's dispassionate commitment

to art rather than social issues is evident in "The Casualties," "The Flood," "Skulls and Cups," "Song," and "Cage," etc. As Obafemi informs us, "The Casualties" shows Clark as the 'Post Mortem' Surgeon and chronicler, terms used by Soyinka for an African writer who stayed in the sidelines (sic) during real events" (32-33). Ezugu finds "The Casualties" distinct because it is pan-Nigerian in scope, it is universal, it is grandiose in style and importantly, it does not take sides as many other war poems on the Nigerian Civil War do (195). Rather, the war poem is "the lyric expression of a partially stated narrative" (128). It must be stated however, that Clark's artistic distance is helped by the absence of the necessity for his emotional involvement in the war. Unlike Achebe, Soyinka, Okigbo, and the soldier poets Mamman Vatsa, Domkat Bali, Paul Ndu, and even Ken Saro Wiwa, Clark was not directly or even remotely affected negatively by the war in the sense that he was on the side of the belligerent and stronger Nigerian forces and his relations and clime were not under attack or in danger of annihilation, humiliation and dehumanization through air raids, shelling machines, rape, imprisonment, systematic liquidation, and conspiratorial starvation.

Pointedly, the morale of the poets who came out of the war was that of anguish and disappointment. This mood reflected, "...the sadness of a generation whose life ambitions had been cut short by 'a sad and senseless war,' whose deathless vision of oncoming peace continued to recede as the physical waste deepened" (Azuonye 2).

Thus, Gabriel Okara's "Suddenly the Air Cracks" paints a picture of the turmoil caused by an air attack. In so doing, it depicts the despoliation that war causes with the attendant insecurities. Paul Ndu's "Evacuation" and "Troy" reflect the speed and lethality of war arsenal while Ken Saro Wiwa's "Near the Front" captures the effect of the noise of war with such onomatopoeic words as "banging," "harsh," "grating," "clang," "snap," and "doom," (Nwachukwu-Agbada 106 –9).

Similarly, the war offers Odia Ofeimun, in the words of Afam Ebeogu, "a good metaphor for the kind of suffering that befalls mankind when men fail to manage their affairs properly" (85). In "Where Bullets have Spoken," Ofeimun sees war as serpents (that) pitch their pinheads coil for spoils... where joy was filling its nests with eggs" (Nwachukwu-Agbada 119). Ofeimun carries his anti-war stance further than the Nigerian shores. In "The Indian Bomb," the message is directed to the whole human race since "the logic of hellfire is the same everywhere (31);" hence, "ploughshares beaten into swords / must feed millions with pebbles / in Delhi as in New York" (32-34).

Finally, the sensibilities of the soldiers who fought on the Nigerian side are articulated in *Voices from the Trench*. This title articulated the soldier's experiences of war, soldiering, death, love and life. P. O. Atu's "Advance to Contact" celebrates valour and determination and brags that war is won through resilience and perseverance. On his part, Mamman Vatsa identifies outside forces' interest, notably the builders of war arsenal who cashed in on the conflict and reaped blood money. In "If I Must Die," Vatsa takes a caustic swipe at the war-mongers who "turn to poor me / To shoot to kill / Those against whom / I have no ill will" (13-15). Domkat Bali's *War Cries* pays

attention to facts. Thus, in such poems as "The Observer Team," "The Deserted Town," "Assault Across the Niger," the poet sticks to facts as he saw them, often criticizing his own men and praising the fighting spirit of the enemy (Nwachukwu-Agbada 124).

This study engages to x-ray the war poetry of T. C. Nwosu and Akomaye Oko in a bid to underpin how the duo war with the soul as well as educate the mind while at the same time lending beauty to an ugly war through artistic trappings encased in their soulful ruminations on the war and its multi-dimensional facets. The exercise promises to add these relatively new voices as fresh and budding additions to the ever expanding terrain of literary criticism on the civil war from the vantage point of the poetic muse.

T. C. Nwosu's Somber Sirens

"Siren" implies a piece of equipment that makes very loud warning sound used in police cars, fire engines and so forth. However, the more poetic description of Nwosu's *Sirens of the Spirit* may be ingrained in, or, gleaned from the Greek mythology version where "siren is any group of sea creatures that were part woman, part fish or part bird, part fish, whose beautiful singing made sailors sail toward them into rocks or dangerous waters. Hence, "siren song" or "siren call" is the temptation to do something that seems attractive but that will ultimately produce bad results (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, online). In Homer's *The Illiad*, Oddyseus is attracted to the sirens, who all but succeeded in debarring him from returning to his avowed and cherished castle and wife. The sirens are therefore dangerous tantalizers that deceptively lure the unsuspecting to their doom.

T. C. Nwosu's collection of the above title is eminently directed to the spirit, the soul of man now eager to embark; and it sounds a warning at the same time. Thus, Nwosu details variations of these sirens that move inexorably through the euphoria of declaration of a Biafran republic, to festive if ominous mobilization, to the actual fratricidal conflict. "The Clouds" is an exhortation geared towards action through mobilization: "Let the clouds / break the silences / of the spirit with their / dark dreary drum" (1-4). The clouds that will break the silences with "dark dreary drums" refer to the frenzy, the heat, the thirst for war but most ferociously the mood of the pre-war Biafran enclave where everyone was thirsty for action, actually enthusing "Ojukwu nye anyi egbe" - Ojukwu, give us guns (that is, firepower or war arsenal) (Ike 12). Definitely those who propagate the propaganda for war 'drum' well and with interior rain imagery, thunder will surely ensue. They are eminently, the sirens of the spirit. The clouds signify, in the main, the frenzied palpable gathering of opinions within the then Eastern Nigeria on whether to engage the rest of Nigeria in war whereas the war surely will turn disastrous. The extended metaphoric implication of an impending rainfall is negative because it will be a downpour which will be catastrophic or devastating. However, the gathered opinions which favour outright war in place of further negotiations with the Federal Government inform the underlying clouds couched in the symbolic sirens of the spirit imagery.

Yet, it is desirable that heavy rain should fall because: "The soil where the dancers/ once wove and / wound their bottoms / is barren / cracking with dryness / drunk of too much battle" (7-12). These dancers are the dramatis personae in the civil war that ravaged the land. What with shells, bombardments and deaths unleashed on the land; where "the rocks are rugged / as paths across misdeeds" (13-14). The clouds that gathered have brought a great storm which results in the 'Passion' which is 'fire' that is "freed from temper" (19-20). Now that the passion has been freed from the temper the storm should be over and give vein to this multiple layered rain imagery which first must be tempestuous, then soothing. It will thus cool now that the earth is thoroughly scorched. The poet is desirous that the moon should begin to shine across the sky to give hope again and show signs of a new lease of life.

In "Once a Voice," the poet laments the loss of the Biafran war, the air of uncertainty and the emptiness of General Gowon's Olive Branch. Gowon had premised the civil nature of the war on a "No victor, no vanquished" paradigm of three Rs, comprising reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. However, the immediate fall-outs of the war were some punitive measures against the erstwhile rebels such as the declaration of 'abandoned property,' et gratia of twenty pounds for the defeated no matter the amount of Biafran currency they may have had, reprisal killings of perceived strong rebel soldiers and university egg-heads, etc. such as Major Timothy Onwuatuegwu (Achebe 82–89; Chimamanda Adichie 422, 427-28). So, the poetpersona does not fail to observe that Biafrans were eager to start the war through the acts of sirens of the spirit. These sirens, or calls result in "the voice" which "came louder/ and sharper/ when the sun/grew round it / and made the fields / one huge ball / of brightness and heat" (12-19).

But the persona laments that even after "such time of raggedness / and redness" (1-2), the so-called moon which is peaceful merely comes and stands between famine and love. Thus, Nwosu shows that after the devastation and ravages of war, the peace, General Gowon's peace was announced; yet, it had no significant positive effect on the defeated, now prostrating erstwhile rebel citizenry. Rather, it well reminded them that they were defeated but justified in their initial fear of depredation and annihilation. To cap it all, the Biafrans live with the blame and shame and helplessness of torpedoed dreams and dashed hopes. Thus, the poem details the immediate aftermath of the civil war on the "pacified" or conquered Biafrans who, though war weary and hungry, now remain helpless and are promised what they hardly got. Nwosu's thesis is that such is to be expected during situations of unremembered dreams.

"Vision and Illusion" clarifies the poet s rhetorical queries aimed at capturing the illusory outcome of the failed country's original dream and clamouring: what should be is not and what is not has become. So, we find a shrill note in the persona's voice of angst and disillusionment as he laments: "Is this the lake-blue isle / of our dreams / the floating incandescence / into whose dazzle we once / flung ourselves praying / to be burnt in the eye?" (1-6). This is a remonstrance on the Odysean voyage to war by Biafrans on the crevices of the deceitful sirens trumpeting for war without adequately counting the cost and propensities of such a heady adventure. It is also, an extension

of the regret and disillusion felt by most Nigerian intellectuals who feel that the gains envisaged for a post independence Nigeria are met in the breach.

The persona at play must be a returnee Biafran who contemplates the entire devastation and carnage. Hence, he wonders when "the tall grass blades / will grow again / when the tranquil charm of rose petals / will come back" (31-35). Indeed, when will life return to this "barren crag," a direct lifting from Tennyson's Ulysses (1-2) which serves doubly as a classical allusion to the King of Ithaca, Ulysses' ruminations, preparatory to a fresh sea voyage. In fact, the persona is in a state of befuddlement: when will life return to normalcy, being that the whole environment is presently comatose and nearly lifeless. When will "the brown-banana/ leaves and teenage twigs /sparkle again" (36-38), he wonders.

In sum, this is a poem reminiscent of the immediate aftermath of the civil war. Thus, the poet wars with the soul of living, the compassionate rhythms of his inner core on the after-effects of this unfortunate war. This in consequence sums Nwosu's position on the war which tags with Herman Wouk's disposition: "War is an old habit of thought, an old frame of mind, an old political technique that must now pass as human sacrifice and human slavery have passed" (Wouk, "Foreword"). This is irrespective of the necessity to never forget the atrocious war for the purposes of recall and restraint since "the beginning of the end of war lies in remembrance" ("Foreword").

Beclouding the Mind: Akomaye Oko's Introspective Disdain for War Mongers

The similarity between Akomaye Oko's and T. C. Nwosu's poetry inheres in the use of the cloud imagery. Whereas Nwosu's title is not "clouds," he actually makes much dark recall on the metaphoric nature of clouds: the cloud signifies foreboding danger. On the other hand, Akomaye Oko entitles his collection *Clouds* to signify the looming danger and the tempest that was the nature of the civil war.

The poem entitled "Blake" is an interesting allusion to the Blakean vision of the world of duality or opposites: everything is good with its grades and bad when misapplied. All things are neutral but act on application. This obviously is Shakespeare's contention. When using the mouthpiece of Friar Lawrence, he philosophizes: "Within the infant rind of this weak flower, Poison hath residence and medicine power," and this is possible because "Naught so vile that on the earth doth live, But to the earth some special good doth give" (Act 2, Scene 3). Thus, in the particular poem entitled "Blake," we are introduced to a series of binary oppositions: "There is a *bright light* in the *darkness / Laughter smiles* on the *angry face /* in the plaits of the emerging frontiers" (1-3; my emphasis)). And the frustrating binaries continue as "We search all day long / in the night of our open eyes" (4-5).

The meaning of these lines in the first and second stanzas of the poem is that while war rages on, some see light in another's darkness and laugh or smile through others anguish. Thus, the war is a game laced with the oxymoron of life that presents itself

in an opportune moment. While Biafra loses some grounds, Nigeria gains some. This is to say that even in fratricidal conflicts, the carnage is neutral: some make meal of it, some groun about or under it. This tags with the local adage that the fire burning another s homestead appears as though it is burning the bush.

In "A Dull Day Poem," there is an allusion to the inability of the poet-persona to concentrate and craft his piece on a night probably inundated with massive shell and grenade attacks. However, the poet persona drapes this incapacity with elegant imagery. Wanting to write his poem on a dull day, "The robes and the jewel vanished—/ left my ugly lady naked / before me" (2-4). This is quintessential warring with the soul: impediments orchestrating the order of things. Of course "the robes and Jewel" that "vanished" are elegant words, tropes and figures that poets use to clothe their "ugly ladies" — their thoughts. This is an obvious reference to the frustrating failure to concentrate in a moment of crisis: the inspiration simply could not avail, yet, the voice of Aristotle reverberates: "those who make the most metaphor will make the best poetry" (Aristotle 36).

Through the application of pathetic fallacy, the poet-persona engages these words that "...weep / in the wooded valley / behind our house" (11-13), just as the persona reports the words are accusing him thus: "You've used us as washerwomen / they moaned, / washing, clothing your / ugly one. / All day, all night" (18-22). Urged to prescribe a metaphoric poultice, some kind of solution, the words asked the poet-persona to stop wasting his time but go to sleep. The servant words will surely serve their master the next day, the poet grumbles, resignedly but self-assuredly.

The importance of this poem, as earlier observed, lies in its disclosure of the agitation in the poet's mind, an agitation that debars him from managing pen on paper. It was written in Nsukka on April 20, 1967; obviously a trying period for everyone who found himself within the sector at a time of intense battles to enter or to repulse.

Further to all the aforesaid, "time is my enemy" is an acid declaration of the times through which the persona must pass. Time becomes his enemy for he cannot but wait it out. So, he wonders, "must I live through these miles? / yes —" (1-2). There is no means to shorten time and the poet persona cannot turn back from time, he cannot run away from the fears of people who suffer in the war and who are all there with their hot fears. He must therefore live in "the midst of time" (10). This short, terse and punchy poem demonstrates the helpless anguish of the poet- persona and by extension some of the elites that saw themselves on the Biafran side. With the advance of time, the carnage and the tears will end; one way or another, but like the mill of God that grinds, surely.

Finally, "the tragedy of action" is couched in that classic Blakean binary, ironic twist where action is not desired but inaction is roundly blamed. If you "Sit down," you become "guilty of inaction". Even though "the spirit surges forth, unto the perils of disapproval" (2), you will surely be blamed by "Your censor...he who disturbed your slumber, / and said, / Rip yourself up / Mr. Winkle" (3-6). The self-same Winkle certainly wakes you up matter-of-factly from your tired sleep, into your soulful sorrows.

Conclusion

We have been able, in the course of these analyses, to link the various definitions of poetry by theorists and critics of various shades and epochs with their utilitarian values. We were able to establish that poets get inspired through exposure, learning and the internal dynamics of a poet's mind as his soul "wars" with ideas and allied experiences. We were able to show too, that symmetry and harmony are central to poetry and these are wedged by musicality. Rhythmic dimensions are the provenance of quality poetry. Poetry of grandeur is usually rhythmical and musical, written and critiqued within the inner recesses; the soul that works with the ear more than with the eyes. We established that those with the gift and the learning of the lofty, poetize the universe, which is why in this instance our chosen poets poetize the Nigeria-Biafra war through engaging the soul in war that is now expressive, now pedagogical. The pedagogic properties of the poetics of poetry as well as its explicative contours provide our leaning with regard to the sound mind's education, even edification via reification. To attain the levels of poesy of grandeur, lofty subjects conduce to raw materials for sublimities and the Nigerian Civil War, for a count, constitutes terrible beauty and in all events elicits soulful wars that give the ideas of thought and garnished transports. We were able to establish this through the explication of the poems under this study's insightful critical evaluation.

Through studied exemplifications we showed successfully, that social circumstance can spur on a poetic rendition woven and dipped in the sweet honey of flowery language. This is achieved when we war with, and tax the soul even though the subject at issue is war itself. This is why we could successfully demonstrate that poetry on the Nigerian Civil War represented through Biafran lenses became possible because of the socio-political upheavals of post-independence Nigeria; coupled with the experiential trappings that goad on the poets themselves. These are energized by inspired emotion that conduces to effusive transports.

We proved that the diegetic engagements of our crop of poets T. C Nwosu and Akomaye Oko are in the final analysis, channeled towards a terse disavowal of war and by extension whatever necessitated and necessitates it. Their attempts are the sublimation of emotions of pity, fear, regret, self-justification but above all, a warning that war is inevitable when any section of the polity is endangered to the level of becoming a prey to fanatics and simpletons of all persuasions (Soyinka 69).

Finally, we showed the kind of soul soldier who lived within the range of the carnage, lived through it and now and again poetizes or sublimates those sordid moments to distil the view that though war is condemnable, it could translate to terrible beauty as it has the capacity to bring out the best in man through inventive and survivalist turns. Through this highest or most intense aspect of *belles-lettres*, the soul soldier has the makings of an educator, educating the mind through the philosophy of living in the hardest of times as ingrained the poetic ruminations of Nwosu and Oko. The study thus, underscores the neutrality of even such a most dangerous event as war through the adumbration of the duality of all principles and phenomena.

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William Blake's Song, "To Tirzah"

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Abstract

An analysis of the poem "To Tirzah" which is the last poem of *Songs of Experience* is taken up in this article, focusing on a triadic study of Blake's Songs, concentrating on the text, design and biblical allusions. Especially with regard to this poem, the biblical connection cannot be ignored, as even the title of the poem is derived from the Bible. Any Biblical Encyclopedia will give numerous references to "Tirzah" as the name of a Canaanite town appearing in many verses of the biblical books like Joshua, I & II Kings, and Song of Solomon. It is also the name of a woman, one of the five daughters of Zelophehad (Numbers 26:33; Numbers 27:1; Numbers 36:11 and Joshua 17:3). It is highly possible that, Blake in his symbolic mythology and especially in this poem alluded to "Tirzah" in both these senses of the biblical background. Primarily in the poem "To Tirzah", Tirzah could be derived from Tirzah, the same daughter of Zelophehad, who asked for a change in Israelite law so that females also could inherit their father's property (Numbers 27:1-6). This became a legal precedent, so that each of the twelve Jewish tribes was bound to their land allocation in perpetuity. Moreover, as a symbol of transience, Blake might have also alluded to Tirzah as the name of the first capital city of the Southern Kingdom of Israel, after the Northern Kingdom of Judah containing Jerusalem, split from it and became independent. This Tirzah City was the home of various Israelite kings who were 'notoriously infamous' for their wrong doings and who opposed the rulers from Jerusalem. Ultimately, this Southern Kingdom was overrun by invaders and erased from history, whereas Judah was re-established after conquest and survived as the home of God's people in the Old Testament. Its capital, Jerusalem, contained the Temple in which the presence of God as well as the Ark of the Covenant was believed to reside. Putting these two factors together, Blake's female figure of Tirzah was, therefore, associated with both mortality, a symbol of transience and a life bound by the limitations of the senses and

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the material world. She stands in opposition to Jerusalem / God / the life of the soul and imagination.

Keywords: Tirzah - a person, Tirzah - a city, life, death, regeneration, imagination, reality

"To Tirzah" is the last poem of Songs of Experience. It was later than other songs and is thus not included in the earlier copies. Apparently the poem gives Blake's thought at a later stage. For Blake, Tirzah is also a symbol for anti-Jerusalem. Tirzah and Rahab stand for symbol of materialism and false religion. Rahab stands for sexual licence and Tirzah means unhealthy repression. Jerusalem for Blake meant the symbol for the true religion which liberates the human personality. Mixing up all these lines of thought, it is enough to understand Tirzah in the present poem as the Mother Earth or a symbol of Mother Earth, whose repressiveness is to imprison souls in "senseless clay" namely the human body. Here Blake finds it cruel to be born into mortal life at all and hence he rhetorically blames the Mother Earth for it. In the poem, Tirzah in the form of a human person represents the physical universe of Nature, mother of all. She represents the source of the physical body of man which is very much in contrast with his true self, the spiritual body vibrant with imagination and creativity. In the illustration to this poem, we find that a body is almost decaying and being "consumed with earth," the legs already gone or buried into the earthy side (See Figure 1: https://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/To_Tirzah). This body which is almost androgynous is looking up to the two women and to an old man. The women may represent the sexual love and mother love.



(Figure 1: "To Tirzah")

The old man offering a pitcher together with the women may be spiritual comforters like the angels bringing pitcher and other reliefs to the children in the poem "The Divine Image" (See Figure 2; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Blake_The_Divine_Image.jpg).



Figure 2

"The mortal part is consumed, the spiritual body is welcomed into the Garden, and love represented by the two women seems to be giving support" (Erdman 94). Along the garment of the old man is written sideways from waist to his feet, "It is raised a spiritual body." This is a quotation from I Corinthians 5:44 which evidently refers to the doctrine of Resurrection of bodies: "It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body." St. Paul goes on to say: "Thus it is written, The first man Adam became a living being; The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (I Corinthians 15:45). As Golgonooza (2017) has rightly pointed out in her blog: "On the design illustrating the poem "To Tirzah", he engraved the words, "It is raised a spiritual body". This text is a comment on the poem, which considers sexual generation" (www.thehumandivine.org).

Laura Quinney (2009) has asserted:

"To Tirzah," a Song of Experience, demonstrates the rage and paralysis of the ascetic estranged from the body by soul-body dualism. It is a temptation to assume that the poem expresses Blake's own views, but that would be a mistake, just as it is a mistake to imagine that any of the Songs of Experience do . . . Meanwhile, the ascetic of "To Tirzah" dwells in a barely tolerable state of hatred toward "Mother Nature," which created the world and the body in which the soul is imprisoned (237).

The man who is actually a spiritual body has been compelled to dress while on this earth in a body of flesh. For this he has to be born, to become either a male or female. The very first stanza of the poem is full of allusions to the Bible:

Whatever is born of mortal birth

Must be consumed with the earth

To rise from generation free:

Then what have I to do with thee? ("To Tirzah", Lines 1-4)

The first two lines echo the famous words "Man, you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The third line reflects a passage: ". . . but those who are accounted worthy to attain that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." (Luke 20:35)

The line 4 is a clear parody of John 2:4 where Jesus asks Mary, his mother "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." Foster Damon (1924) affirmed that Blake undoubtedly wrote this poem when trying to interpret the unfilial remark of the child Jesus in the Temple and observed: ". . . Blake's conclusion was that Jesus was interrupted in his consideration of spiritual matters by the intrusion of her who bound him to the corporeal world. This is the case with every man" (281). And so, the boy in "To Tirzah" is asking Mother Earth, "Then what have I to do with thee?"

The Second stanza closely alludes to Genesis 2:17, where before the Fall even though Eve had been externalized from Adam, they were not aware of the sexes. They became aware of it after the Fall and "they knew they were naked." Having this verse of Genesis in mind Blake wrote "The sexes sprung from shame & pride / Blow'd in the morn; in evening died;" ("To Tirzah" 5-6). God actually wanted Adam and Eve to live in the unfallen state without feeling shame or nakedness. But the plan was only short-lived and hence "blow d in the morn; in evening died". Again in line 7, God is changing the death into a sleep, a midway between death and eternal life as embodied in 'The Starry floor', 'The Watery shore' and the 'slumberous mass' in the "Introduction". God is letting man and woman for a short sojourn on earth. But, in fact, on earth numbly feeling the separateness, man and woman "rose to work and weep" ("To Tirzah" 8).

The boy is aware of the fact that he was born into the physical body due to Eve or the Mother Earth. Hence he is not happy with her. The woman might have thought that her pain of labour was only binding him worth suffering. She does not know at all that she by giving birth to his physical body was only binding him. So he thinks about her:

And with false self-deceiving tears
Didst blind my nostrils, eyes, and ears,
Didst close my tongue in senseless clay,
And me to mortal life betray: ("To Tirzah" 11-14).

The only hope is the resurrection of this body which will become effective because of the Death and resurrection of Jesus. So he says, "The Death of Jesus set me free: / Then what have I to do with thee?" ("To Tirzah" 15-16).

The body has understood that, "the law of the spirit in Christ Jesus has set him free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). and so he is "boasting of the Lord" (I Corinthians 1:30) to the extent of rejecting his mother. Thus "To Tirzah" placed at the end of the *Songs of Experience* becomes a fitting conclusion as it expresses the third stage - revolution. The lad of the poem becomes himself authentic, by rejecting the maternal authority using Jesus own words to Mary: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Foster Damon (1973) observes, "... the sense goes deeper; for in rejecting the mother the lad also rejects what his mother gave him: his mortal body, with its closed senses and the misery of sex. When that is transcended, "It is Raised a Spiritual body" (378).

As pointed out by Mellor (1974), "a man can return to the divine vision only by rejecting his physical form, by being "raised a spiritual body, . . . Innocence cannot survive in such a world: man must deny his mortal body to enter heaven" (100). As Blake himself had argued in *The Gates of Paradise*, "only death can save man from human evil, from suffering and despair." Quinney (2009) has observed: "In truth, the speaker is imprisoned less by the body he loathes than by the 'mind-forg'd manacles' of his harsh Pauline spirituality. The illustration shows a fainting man attended by a bearded elder whose robe is inscribed with the Pauline formula of resurrection: "it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). Quinney (2009) continued to observe: "In other contexts, Blake quotes this phrase approvingly, but he was not averse to ironic treatment of scripture or to criticism of Paul, and here the quotation seems to be used enigmatically. The speaker of 'To Tirzah' remains in sore need of spiritual refreshment. Perhaps he is fainting under the psychological burden created by Paul's dread of the physical body" (238).

From our study we come to understand that apparently Blake idealized the state of Innocence. But later with the time of completion of Experience poems the realization dawns on him that the contraries are necessary for human life and in the final stage these contraries are to be balanced and harmonized. Christine Gallant (1978) suggests the term "Polarities" to express this idea, a term explained by Alan Watts. Gallant quotes Alan Watts to say that,

Polarity . . . is something much more than simply duality or opposition. For to say that opposites are "polar. is to say much more than that they are apart: it is to say that they are related and joined - that they are the term ends or extremities of a single whole. Polar opposites are therefore inseparable opposites (44).

Innocence and Experience are such inseparable opposites, for the wholeness of man, represented by the whole Man, by the God Man, i.e., Christ. In Him the childlike and lamblike Innocence and Experience, the wise tiger of wrath are both harmoniously blended together. It is to such a state of higher Innocence that the body in "To Tirzah" is raised as a spiritual body.

And at the time of Blake's death it seems that he himself was taken to this world of higher Innocence. This we affirm from the testimony from Blake's friend, George Richmond in a letter of 15 August 1827 to Samuel Palmer, informing the news of Blake's death. Bentley (1969) records this: "Just before He died His countenance became fair - His eyes brightened and He burst out in Singing of the things He saw in Heaven. In truth He died like Saint as a person who was standing by Him observed" (347).

The Bard who was singing throughout his life the Songs of Innocence and of Experience interpreting and seeking new insights from the Bible, might have sung at the death bed the songs about the Eternal Lamb and His Sheepfold as he could better perceive in the Heaven in a unified total vision.

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Crossfires: Representations of War and Fatherhood in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

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Abstract

The statuses and roles of father characters in war novels, generally, appear less frequently interrogated in literary analysis. This assertion also rings true of American William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1929) and Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun (2005). This paper explores the intersection of war and fatherhood in relation to how the male characters in the two novels negotiate and manage their roles as fathers in wartime situations. It examines war and its overarching implication on the roles of father characters as family providers and protectors by attempting to investigate what happens in a typical gendered socio-familial space when the responsibilities which are, conventionally, attached to fatherhood are frustrated by situations of armed conflict and its aftermath. Deploying the theoretical framework of gender criticism, the paper explicates how the psychological issues that are associated with the images of war, death and destruction become significant causative factors of family disintegration. Thus, while the Nigerian and American civil wars are physically destructive engagements, the emotional and psychological tolls they unleash on the civilian populace appear even more debilitating in the two narratives.

Keywords: Fatherhood, masculinity, maleness, war, disintegration, expectations, protection, wellbeing

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Introduction

A retired lawyer, Jason Compson III, in The Sound and the Fury, and a professor of Mathematics, Odenigbo, in Half of a Yellow Sun, are the dominant father characters caught in the crossfires of wars which have marginalising effects on their positions as fathers. Anthony Stevens explains that a crucial factor affecting how writers portray a particular war is the stage the war has reached at the time of its representation. He further elucidates that usually, at the outbreak of a war, "a surprisingly large number [of people] seem to be in favour, carried along by the excitement of the moment in fervour of patriotic enthusiasm. Disillusionment sets in as the war progresses. Disillusionment reaches its climax when hostilities are over and there is time to reflect on what it has all cost" (6). Remarkably, Stevens' explanation resonates with the two war narratives. However, there are still diversities of war-experiences and frameworks that make the statuses and roles of fatherhood to differ from person to person, society to society, culture to culture, country to country, and region to region. Thus, the roles and conduct of fatherhood are patterned not only by socio-political, religious and historical meanings, but also by the intractable phenomenon of wars and armed conflict. While Jason Compson III survives the American civil war with all members of his family and deals with postwar psychological and economic damages in The Sound and the Fury, Odenigbo also survives the Nigerian Civil War with his wife and child, however, the loss of his mother, sister-in-law and intellectual documents, leaves him distraught by the end of the novel. Faulkner and Adichie's narratives, thus, represent the uncommon sites of the states of helplessness of males as fathers in a typical home amidst breakdown of law and order in war-time and postwar situations.

A defining aspect of fatherhood revolves around the protecting and breadwinning roles of fathers in specific family units. Richard G. Spooner, the Family Medicine expert, defines a father as a male parent, or a person who takes the responsibility for protecting, caring for or rearing a child (1775). Spooner's definition underscores the importance of the protecting role of a father to the survival of a child. Often, the protecting and breadwinning roles become problematic in times of armed conflict. Also, the convoluted nexus between fatherhood and masculinity further places the father in potentially helpless situation when, as a non-combatant individual. At times like this, his parental gender and masculinity appear to have been erased by the volatile situation of armed conflict as a result of his inability to perform some basic fatherhood roles such as breadwinning and protecting. Barbara Hobson rightly argues that the social politics of fatherhood cannot be divorced from masculinity politics, men's authority in the family and breadwinning (5). Perhaps, it is in recognition of the abovecited fatherhood versus masculinity complex connection that Laura King avows that fatherhood could both validate and threaten manly and masculine ideals (156). King further explains that "[f]atherhood can both prove and challenge a man's masculine identity and sense of manliness. Some aspects of parenting such as bread-winning, allowed men to secure adult masculinity, whereas other aspects of fatherhood such as the intimate care of children, could prove problematic [...]" (157).

What happens when the statuses and roles of fatherhood are frustrated as a result of the phenomenon of armed conflict, especially, the important role of breadwinning? The function of breadwinning is a significant aspect of a father's sense of masculinity which gender and fatherhood scholars such as David Blankenhorn (357) and Scott Coltrane (34) have positively associated with the trait of masculinity. For Blankenhorn and Coltrane, not only is breadwinning an important fatherhood marker, it is also a crucial aspect of a father's masculinity. How does a father construct and maintain his masculine identity and stance when, for instance, he watches his child's hair turn thin and reddish as kwashiorkor sets in and the father's providing role is manifestly challenged. Most importantly, how does a man effectively earn the label of fatherhood in the highly volatile situation of armed conflict? In this instance, the father fails in his providing role because he has no food or source of nutrition to offer his child.

The term, masculinity, is deployed in this paper to mean an array of characteristics that are, commonly, thought to be typical of, or suitable for men. On the other hand, masculinities theory, which is a spin-off from masculinity, is used to refer to different expressions of the extent or intensity of manliness. The gender theories of Masculinities examine male(ness); in other words, the theories explore men as men and not necessarily as archetypes or defenders of patriarchy. As a result, the theories seek an explanation to the reason males maintain dominant social roles over females and other gender identities that are perceived as "feminine" in a given society. They also seek a rationalisation to how manliness and masculine gendered codes of behaviour that influence the lived-experiences of men are constructed.

Marginalised masculinity which is a concept of gender theories advanced by postulations in Masculinities by the Australian sociologist, R. W. Connell, serves as critical and analytical tool for investigating representations of war and fatherhood. Men who are not able to demonstrate qualities which are conventionally associated with the dominant hegemonic masculine category, are generally, perceived as marginalised. The novels utilised for this paper are read as family narratives with the searchlight on how father characters negotiate their status and roles in war situations.

Representations of War and Fatherhood in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun

The intersection of war, masculinity and fatherhood adds to the complex roles and statuses of men as fathers. The already established state of the convoluted nature of fatherhood (Osuji 843) is further aggravated by men's attempts to demonstrate strength by masking their secret fears and anxieties during situations of armed conflict in order to meet prevailing socio-cultural demands and expectations of masculinity. Robert Jensen maintains that "this planet can[not] last for long if the current concept of masculinity [strength and domination] endures" (82). The dialectics of masculinity and the issue of emasculation are often common sites male worries when the sounds of war are heard. Eugenia Collier rightly declares that "literature is a reservoir of truth

to which those who thirst continuously bring their pitchers" (46). What happens to fatherhood in wartime experience? Most importantly, how does a man effectively earn the label of fatherhood in times of armed conflict? To address these questions, the destabilising effects of wars and their implications on the roles and status of fathers necessitate a mulling over of the state of fatherhood in war situations. The two novels not only portray wars between the ideologically polarised north countries of America and Nigeria as well as the devastating effects of wars on families but also depict the gendered socio-familial expectation(s) which often places conflicting responsibilities on males as men and fathers.

To gain a better insight into William Faulkner and Chimananda Ngozi Adichie's father characters that are caught in the American and Nigerian civil wars crossfires, a brief contextual familiarity with the two narratives will be helpful. Firstly, a cursory look at Faulkner's widely acclaimed fourth novel, The Sound and the Fury will help deepen the understanding of the analysis of the text. Set in the fictional world of Yoknapatawpha County (northern Mississippi), immediately after the American Civil War, The Sound and the Fury focuses on the Compson family. It depicts the overwhelming effects of loss of the Civil War on the psyche of the South using characters such as members of the Compson family who, although suffer no physical mutilations, bear the invisible scars of the horrific war. The character of Jason Compson III, the patriarch of the Compson family, is posthumously introduced to the reader as the husband of Caroline Compson and father of their four children – Quentin, Jason, Benjy and Caddy. The Sound and the Fury is a remarkable four-part novel with each of the sections assigned a different narrator. Thus, the reader must deal with the burden of realigning the four parts in order to make sense of all the characters and events which the author recreates in his imaginary postwar Yoknapatawpha County in the war-torn South (the Confederate States). The realignment helps gain a better appreciation of the economic, material and psychological effects of the American Civil War and the Reconstruction period on the, once aristocratic, Compson family. The toll of the war on Jason Compson III and his family is so huge that by the end of the narrative he has become distrustful, withdrawn, cynical and a deeply philosophical. As a result, until his untimely death, he indulges in idle relaxation. To while away the time, he spends all day drinking whiskey as well as reading assical Greek and Roman literature even as his family disintegrates.

On the other hand, Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* begins in 1961 (the early sixties) when the young Ugwu, an uneducated boy comes from the village to work for a politically radical professor, Odenigbo, at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His girlfriend, Olanna, is introduced to the reader as a beautiful, London-trained daughter of a wealthy businessman. Odenigbo and Olanna eventually get married during the war in the midst of an air raid. However, when there is a delay in their attempts to have a child, Odenigbo's mother brings a young village girl, Amala, to live with the couple. The narrative shifts to January 1966 (the mid-late sixties) in Nsukka, where Olanna and Odenigbo are raising a daughter, named Baby. They hear that the Nigerian government has been overthrown in a military coup led by Igbo officers. Odenigbo is

happy, greets this news with enthusiasm and Biafran patriotism becomes palpable in the eastern region. Shortly after the news, Olanna travels to Kano (a town in northern Nigeria) to visit her relatives and a counter coup led by northern officers unleash a widespread anti-Igbo violence in the north region. In Kano, Olanna discovers that the place is in disarray and all the Igbo residents have been massacred by their Hausa neighbours. When all attempts at peaceful negotiations to resolve mass killings and destruction of Igbo businesses fail, Ojukwu, the military governor of the Eastern region, declares the secession of the region and the new independent Republic of Biafra. The Nigeria-Biafra War has started; many people begin leaving the university town of Nsukka, Odenigbo and Olanna hurriedly flee the troubled town for Abba (Odenigbo's village), amidst bombings. As hostilities intensify, there are refugee camps that are set up for citizens of the new State who are tormented by starvation, diseases, wanton destruction, rape, and fear of death as well as other numerous atrocities of war. By the end of the war, Odenigbo has become despondent, withdrawn, drinks excessively and his conduct quickly deteriorates. Ugwu, now literate, begins to write a book about Biafra.

The above two narrative contexts provide the basic framework that foregrounds the analysis of fathers characters who attempt to perform their fatherhood roles while they are enmeshed in the crossfires of war. Firstly, an examination of Faulkner's modernist novel, The Sound and the Fury, which starts at the end of the America Civil War. Although the war has been fought and lost by the Confederate States, the effects of war still remain palpable. In Lawrence Durrell's Sebastian, a war novel set mainly in Switzerland shortly after World War II, one of the characters remarks that that "war never really ends" (174). Evidently, long after battles have been lost and won as well as declared over, the effects of war remain significant aspects of war and continue even in spite of the fact that the arms of war have been laid down. In Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, although the events in novel commence from the end of the American Civil War, the characters that make up the Compson family are shaped by the experiences of the traumas of that war. The Compsons, a once highly-placed aristocratic family, is steered by the father-character of Jason Compson III in Yoknapatawpha County, northern Mississippi (in the defeated South), who already believes that time is dead and "no battle is ever won" (Faulkner 85). This idea resonates with Durrell's notion of war which is voiced through one of his characters. Thus, wars do not only breed destruction on all the warring factions, they never really end because the consequences of wars linger almost forever and continue to affect the survivors and others who just read about such wars.

The Civil War and Reconstruction periods devastated many of the once-great Southern families economically, socially, and psychologically. The Compson family is one of such Southern households that suffers the devastating effects of the civil war. This devastation is mostly portrayed through loss of lives, morals, properties, wealth, family honour, environmental destruction and displacement of family members. Faulkner employs the technique of stream of consciousness to depict the devastation of war which is represented through losses and traumatic remembrances by war

victims. Although his style often makes it quite tasking to recognize which characters are speaking at various times in the text, the technique imitates the tangible flow of thoughts which plunges the reader into the narrators' minds where the ideas and words of characters surge simultaneously.

The sequence of events in The Sound and the Fury begins after the Compson family had already lost much of their wealth and land. The reader meets the posthumous character of Jason Compson III, the father of Quentin, Jason, Benjy, and Caddy, whose inability to deal with the civil war family misfortunes, drives to an untimely death. Although he is no longer present in the family but his absence is compensated, as it were, by an array of words he leaves behind in order to guide his children in the affairs of life. Unfortunately, most of his legacy of words do not appear to be very uplifting since much of the advice he has given to his children appear to stem from a depressed and resigned mind – a mind that has been evidently steeped in alcoholism and fatalistic belief that he cannot control the events that befall his family. Yet, his words become some sort of sacred document his sons live by. At some point, Jason Compson III is not sure of the past, neither does effectively keep track of the current events happening around him and his family. Thus, he develops strange philosophies to guide him and his family. For instance, he insists that "[b]ecause no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools" (Faulkner 85). The downward spiral of the once-proud aristocratic father is mostly discernible through his philosophical musings, words and advice to his children. On a symbolic level, the collapse of the Compson family is emblematic of the gradual disintegration of the Old South after the war.

Jason Compson III is psychological broken by victory of the North and grave loss of family fortune. Thus, his sense of masculinity is hurt, as a result, he feels disempowered, marginalised and dishonoured. Throughout the narrative, he appears to merely exist as an alcoholic shadowy figure in the home and struggles to maintain a form of resolute manhood. As the narrative advances, the reader realises that in spite of all the airs geared towards coming across as an honourable gentleman of means, he is not honourable, gentle manly and an even efficient father. Jason Compson III becomes more of a physically available but functionally deficient father. Michael J. Diamond in My Father Before Me: How Fathers and Sons Influence Each Other Throughout Their Lives, points out to the ills of father absence and its attendant father hunger. As a result, Diamond emphasizes that "a father need not be physically absent from the home for his son to grow up with a father hunger that makes it difficult for the son, in turn, to father his own son" (87). Quentin seems to express this father hunger through obsessive repetitions of his father words. As a result, like his father, Quentin remains a prisoner of time - the ticks of clocks, the chiming of bells, and the movements of shadows. Quentin is so absorbed in his father's words that he constantly hears the voice of his father making cynical remarks such as "clocks slay time ... time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life" (Faulkner 85) and "[f]ather said a man is the sum of his misfortunes. One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then time is your misfortune, Father said. A gull on an invisible wire attached through space dragged. You carry the symbol of your frustration into eternity. Then the wings are bigger Father said only who can play a harp' (Faulkner 129). Quentin appears to reside in a metaphorical space in the past – a space he inhabits with his father, Jason Compson III. As a result, he seems comfortable that the only way to salvage his family's pride and honour, is not through reflection and hard work like he first senses, but through an action of suicide.

After the American Civil War comes to an end, Jason Compson III had fashioned his existence around the defeat of the confederate States and his personal misfortunes as a result of the war. However, to maintain the impression of the former glory of the pre-war Compsons when the family is associated with the crème de la crème of Yoknapatawpha County, he sells the remaining part of the family land which is already being gradually lost due to the armed conflict. With the proceeds from the land, he funds Quentin's college education at Harvard. Part of the money is also used to finance a befitting upper-class wedding for his daughter, Caddy. The effects of the war leaves Jason Compson III very pessimistic. It appears he does not think that life has got much to offer him, given the magnitude of what he perceives as the undesirable effects of the civil and the hard times his family has fallen into after the cessation of hostilities and the victory of the North (the Union). He becomes a man and a father who is full of words – words which are mostly philosophical. He preoccupies himself with words in the form of advice to his children about issues of life but he appears to have lost a sense of what is morally right or wrong. For instance, he neither thinks much of Caddy's chastity nor does he believe incestuous relationship in his family amounts to anything. Postwar Southern values now mean little or nothing to him, except the idea of comporting himself as a gentleman that will never hurt a lady.

Having successfully grappled with the sound(s) of war during the civil war, at the end of the war, Jason Compson III attempts to deal with the furry of loss and familial social displacement. He struggles to maintain a semblance of aristocracy by whatever trappings of superior class in society that he can lay his hands on, such as having his son at Harvard, giving Caddy a high-class wedding and reading classical literature from where he appears to draw philosophical ideas. Having lost a great deal of family fortunes to war, Jason Compson III must take steps to reinsert the once social-upward family where it belonged – the upper wealthy class. Thus, the marginalisation of his masculinity within the hegemonic order of the society's highly cultured and wealthy gentry, becomes a looming reality Jason Compson III perceives he must defeat. His attempts are met with little or no success even as his children begin to fall apart and neglect much of the Southern values which, hitherto, held them together.

Jason Compson III has everything slipping from his hands and crashing. His son, Jason IV, lives in a perpetual state of rage and "sees life almost entirely as a conspiracy to frustrate him" (Faulkner 5). His most intellectually promising son, Quentin, kills himself by drowning in the Charles River so that he will not forget the grief of Caddy's dishonour. Therefore, he holds on to that grief and thinks the world is meaningless

without a form of grief to keep one going. For this Harvard son, grief only prods him on – offering him something to live for. By the last section of the narrative, Caddy had disappeared. The Compson family's pathology primarily rests on incest and incestuous thoughts. Thus, issues around virginity, especially, caddy's virginity becomes a high-point of discussion between father and son. Ultimately, it becomes a critical stress factor for Quentin - an adult child who references his father and appears to live in the past. As a result, it seems he stops living after his father's death and only carries on by making his father to live through him through bringing him into almost all his conversations and thoughts. For instance, concerning the idea of virginity and incest, he engages his father in the past and brings it to the present:

In the South you are ashamed of being a virgin. Boys. Men. They lie about it. Because it means less to women, Father said. He said it was men invented virginity not women. Father said it's like death: only a state in which the others are left and I said, But to believe it doesn't matter and he said, That's what's so sad about anything: not only virginity and I said, Why couldn't it have been me and not her who is unvirgin and he said, That's why that's sad too; nothing is even worth the changing of it... (Faulkner 22).

Long after Jason Compson III dies, following the footsteps of their alcoholic father, the Compson children's condition of self-absorption progressively grows worse. Thus, they appear to lose touch with the reality of the world around them. This also acts as a symbol of the decline of the South, generally. More so, they become disinterested in the core traditional values of the Old South which includes courage, moral strength, perseverance, purity, grace, chastity and chivalry, all directed at the defense and upholding of the honour of their family name. Ultimately, Jason Compson III leaves behind him a household in a state of decay – a grouchy wife and mother as well as and four curious children who make efforts to preserve their pre–civil war social structure in the South as the great depression looms ahead.

The story of the Compson family becomes one long tale of self-obsession, alcohol, disability, incest, bitterness, suicide, greed, decadence and general depravity. By the end of the novel, there is hardly any cheerful news about the Compson children and a future for the Compson family legacy. The youngest child, Benjy Compson, a 33 year-old mentally challenged man, has been callously castrated to prevent him from bearing any impaired child. The very promising Quentin, a student at Harvard commits suicide by drowning. Thus, coming across as a mentally ill individual, although he appears very intelligent. A third brother, Jason, has become an embittered man. His bitterness is driven by having to work at a dead-end job in the town's general store in order to provide for the family. The only daughter of the family, Caddy (Candace) has married and divorced. She is banished from the family home and Mrs. Compson has forbidden Caddy's name from being mentioned in the home. Caddy remarries in California for five years and divorces. Subsequently, Caddy disappears in Paris during World War II. Benjy commits no real sins, but the Compsons' general decline is physically manifested through his retardation and his inability to differentiate between morality and immorality.

Unlike the America Civil War represented in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* that started as a result of the ideological differences between northern and southern states which revolve around issue of slavery, in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the Nigerian Civil War started as a result of political crisis arising from ethnic distrust and cleansing which the northern region unleashed against the southern region. However, like the south in America civil war which declared a secession from the United States (the Union), the Confederate States of America (the Confederacy), in the Nigeria-Biafra War, the south eastern part of the country declared secession from Nigeria and proclaimed the Republic of Biafra. The defeat of the Confederacy (South) in the America Civil War, with all the attendant uncertainties, lawlessness, carnage, hunger, disease and death, is akin to the defeat of the Republic of Biafra (South-eastern Region) in the Nigeria-Biafra War. It is against this volatile backdrop of hostilities and critical human exposure to danger that father characters in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* must also function as fathers and heads of households.

The main father character in the narrative in Half of a Yellow Sun is Odenigbo who, incidentally, becomes a father during the war. He is one of the most enthusiastic characters who reveled about the idea of the cessation of southeastern part of Nigeria and the creation of the new state of Biafra. For instance, at the declaration of the new Republic of Biafra, Odenigbo's joy and excitement were palpable as he "climbed up to the podium waving his Biafran flag: swaths of red, black, and green and, at the centre, a luminous half of a yellow sun. Biafra is born! We will lead Black Africa! We will live in security! Nobody will ever again attack us! Never again!" (Adichie 163) This enthusiasm is short-lived as the attendant carnage, hunger and diseases begin to take their tolls mostly on the civilian population of the new nation. By this time, Odenigbo has become the biological father of Baby (a daughter, also referred to as Chiamaka), whose biological mother is Amala, not his wife, Olanna. Amala is a girl that Odenigbo's mother brings from the village, to be her son's wife since Olanna is having delays in conceiving a baby. Odenigbo also has a strong, albeit turbulent, relationship with his mother who is referred to as, "Mama," in the novel. Although Mama negatively affects Odenigbo's relationship with Olanna, her death, during the war starts Odenigbo on a dark path of alcoholism and depression.

The effect of war on moral values, as mirrored in the two novels, is evident in lawlessness during situations of armed conflict which is common and often manifests in form of rape. Other father characters that are relevant to the analysis of the effects of the war on father characters are Uncle Mabezi, and Chief Ozobia. Even religious fathers are caught in the crossfire of piety and profanity. For example, Father Marcel is a priest who assists in coordinating the refugee relief with Kainene, Olanna's twin sister. Father Marcel is later found to have been forcing young women in the camp to sleep with him in exchange for food. The Italian fatherhood scholar, Luigi Zoja, affirms that sexual pillaging generates silence; it paralyses the mind by putting the stamp of shame on it and dehumanises both the victim and the aggressor (23). The fear of exposure and shame keep female victims silent. Thus, most of the young women who are molested by Father Marcel at the refugee camp could not make formal reports as

a result of disgrace and embarrassment associated with rape. Also, not even Ojukwu, the Biafran leader who is supposed to uphold some basic moral values in his newly-declared republic, is free from reports of sexual impropriety. The leader is rumoured to trump up saboteur charges against some men and sends them to prison while their wives will be at his disposal. Furthermore, the civil war transforms the once-innocent boy, Ugwu, to a gang-rapist. By gang-raping the vulnerable girl at the bar, Ugwu and the other soldiers act under the guise of general lawlessness during the war to commit atrocities. This demonstrates that in times of war, the effects of its associated physical and psychological trauma can be far-reaching.

Equally, the consequences of war can also be observed in the narrative from the behavior of Olanna's parents, Chief and Mrs. Ozobia. Chief Ozobia is the father of Olanna and her twin sister, Kainene, Olanna is beautiful and her parents try to take advantage of her beauty by attempting to offer her as a bribe to help secure business deals from Chief Okonji. Thus, out of fear of marginalization because of wartimeinduced lack, Chief Ozobia maintains a masculine hegemony by any means necessary. Olanna is so astonished that she wonders whether her parents "stated it [the promised affair] verbally, plainly, or had it been implied? (Adichie 32). Parental abandonment is portrayed through Olanna's wealthy parents who quickly leave the country when the war started. Since Olanna and her sister refuse to flee with their parents, her mother informs her of the arrangement to get out of Biafra, "your father and I have finalized our plans. We have paid somebody who will take us to Cameroon and get us on a flight from there to London" (Adichie 10). Chief Ozobia and his wife are pressured by the desire of their own safety and decide to leave their children behind in a war zone. Thus, more critical than the physical war between two factions is the psychological war individuals in the war-torn environment must wage to keep themselves from disintegrating. Like, Mr. Compson, Odenigbo finds the state of war and post-war instability very debilitating. As a result, he retires to idleness and alcoholism.

Fatherhood may have undergone insignificant changes in some areas of role-expectations, but what appears to be a constant factor is the father's provider role. It is in this sense of the provider role status that Jessie Bernard points out that "the ideal father at mid-century was seen as a good provider who set a good table, bought the shoes, and kept his children warmly clothed" (3). In the midst of uncertainties of war and looming catastrophe, Odenigbo is distrust with a sick child in war-torn Biafra. One of the protecting roles of fatherhood includes preservation, no matter the situation. Thus, Odenigbo is expected to take action to preserve his child by procuring the necessary medication to make Baby well again. His inability to provide medical care for his ailing biological child, leaving his child's survival to become the sole responsibility of his wife (the child's adoptive mother) erodes his power, thus, marginalising him further as the head of his family. This points to the enfeebling effects of war which generally affects fathers and father figures as a result of their inability to fulfill their roles in wartime situations.

There are also some unspeakable atrocities of war as Adichie portrays in the northern part of Nigeria where individuals of Igbo extraction are massacred without restrictions.

For instance, in the narrative, Olanna's maternal uncle, Mr. Mbaezi is another father character who is caught in the crossfire of the Nigerian-Biafran armed conflict. He had made the northern region his home, and lives with his family in Kano where he founded the Igbo Union Grammar School. Unfortunately, when the war breaks out, he is gruesomely murdered alongside his entire family members in his compound in Sabon Gari, Kano. The author depicts a graphic portrait of the horrors and futility of the Nigerian Civil War. This is portrayed when Olanna travels to the northern region of the country (Kano) to see his Uncle and finds out that the whole family has been brutally killed by some northerners. This discovery leaves her emotionally, psychologically and physically in a state of shock; as a result she becomes the traumatised witness who cannot effectively give expression to what she had seen. This is because nothing prepared her for the sight that greets her when she gets to her uncle's compound:

Uncle Mbaezi [his body] lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted lips [...] (Adichie 147).

The lawlessness of war and the effects on fathers and father figure characters can be seen from the fate of Uncle Mbaezi and his family. In this instance, both the supposed traditional protector (the father) and those he is supposed to protect (his family members) are destroyed. Lesley Milne maintains that "[1]ove and war are accustomed partners, in idiom, in legend and in military vocabulary. [...] The phrase "All's fair in love and war" equates them as areas where in extreme adversity the concept of "fairness" no longer applies" (1). The Mbaezi family is murdered by their neighbours at the early onset of the Nigerian Civil War, not minding that the head of the family had been a good neighbour to them for many years and have also interacted cordially with them – but all is fair in war. One of Uncle Mbaezi's friends, Abdulmalik, is among the killers and boasts, "[w]e finished the whole family. It was Allah's will" (Adichie 148).

While there is no glamour in war situations, Odenigbo's relationship with Olanna crystallises into marriage in the midst of rumours and threats of war. As the new couple are about to cut their wedding cake, the first shelling is heard. This is symbolic of their marriage, a union caught in a metaphorical crossfire of the Nigerian-Biafra war. From the beginning, their union becomes a marital relationship that is doomed and shaped by "the clatter of gunfire and the boom of mortars" (Adichie 366). The fact that Olanna and Odenigbo's wedding is the moment of the first bombing of the town of Umuahia, gives a glimpse of what their marriage which turns out to be unstable. Also, the fact that "Ugwu heard the sound just before they cut their cake in the living room, the swift wah-wah-wah roar in the sky" (Adichie 202), indicates some imminent marital turbulence. Odenigbo continues to maintain his enthusiasm about the new nation of Biafra and becomes active in the war course under Manpower Directorate. He monitors the progress of the war through Radio Biafra and is full of hope that the new state will win.

Gradually, Odenigbo faces the stark reality of war. His physical condition and behaviour progressively deteriorates. His state is made worse not only because he could not reconcile with his mother before her death, but by the fact that he could not find her body. As the loss of Biafra becomes imminent, Ugwu observes that his onceadmired master has significantly depreciated. He looks pitiful and only appears fixated with war news, "[o]ur troops have lost all the captured territory in the Midwest and the march to Lagos is over [...]. He shook his head, We were sabotaged" (Adichie 204). From Ugwu's earlier description of Odenigbo when he is bought by his aunt to live with the professor at the beginning of the novel in Nsukka, to the boy's later description of the professor at the end of the novel, the toll the Nigerian civil war has taken on Odenigbo is evident. After the fall of Biafra, he returns to Nsukka and faces a deserted and destroyed house.

Through Ugwu's description of his master's condition, the reader gets a deeper insight into the professor's psychological state by the end of the war. The boy recounts that "[m]aster squatted beside him and began to search through the charred paper, muttering. After a while he sat down on the bare earth, his legs stretched in front of him, and Ugwu wished he had not; there was something so undignified, so unmasterly about it" (Adichie 18). Odenigbo's psychological condition has degenerated and he does not bother with his former trappings of masculine glamour as he confronts the charred remains of the long years of his intellectual efforts. Thus, Odenigbo, the once focused, calm and confident professor has become despondent. Like Jason Compson III in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury after the defeat of the South, Odenigbo has become an alcoholic – drinking and vomiting. Unable to deal with the disintegration of his ideals of freedom, dignity and financial independence which the new state of Biafra represents, he appears to lose his sense of self-worth. Physically, both fathers survive the civil wars in America and Nigeria, however, they fail to survive psychologically which is evident in their inability to effectively heal from the traumas of war.

War breaks down the gender role boundary, marginalises non-combatant males and exposes the vulnerability of men as fathers. Since law of armed conflict only comes into effect after the end of wars when the destructive effects of wars can hardly be ameliorated, the tolls on families are huge. The imaginative construction of armed conflicts in Adiche and Faulkner's novels which reveals the economic, physical and psychological disintegration of the two families provides an alternative frame of interpretation of male parental role inhibitions. Both novels represent civil wars and their effects on father characters who suffer because their protecting and providing roles are compelled to be suspended as a result of war. Families must be protected as well as provided for at all times – the basic needs of food and shelter must always be met, especially, for children. However, since fathers are often psychologically and physically caught up in crossfires of war, their core roles and statuses as fathers often fail as their masculinity is marginalised by the phenomenon of armed conflicts as mirrored in the two texts. Arguably, the two main father characters in the novels are destroyed; while Jason Compson III is physically and psychologically destroyed,

Odenigbo remains physically alive but only a shadow of himself – the real ebullient professor of Mathematics has been destroyed. Physically, both fathers survive the civil wars in America and Nigeria, however, they fail to survive psychologically which is evident in their inability to effectively heal from the traumas of war. Thus, while the American and Nigerian civil wars end in the course of Faulkner and Adichie's narratives, both fathers are caught up and still remain in the crossfires of the two wars.

Conclusion

In times of war, gender roles and statuses are often eroded since both non-combatant males and females belong to the category of enfeebled populace that endure untold human suffering which results from lawlessness and destruction. Thus, in in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1929), Jason Compson III suffers loss of wealth (lands) and family honour. With a dysfunctional household and children who live mostly in the past, Jason Compson III eventually disintegrates along with members of his family as he faces hard times due to the impact of the American Civil War on the South. Similarly, in Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun (2005), both Odenigbo and Uncle Mbaezi's statuses and roles as protectors and breadwinners are grossly undermined during the Nigerian Civil War. Consequently, their immediate concern as fathers who reside with their families, both in the eastern and northern parts of the country, becomes mere survival. Sadly, while Uncle Mbaezi could neither protect/save the lives of his family nor his own life, Odenigbo is broken and completely deteriorates at the end of the narrative. In these cited-instances, there is huge frustration as well as failure of the paternal role. Correspondingly, in these situations, the vulnerability and fragility of the state of fatherhood is underscored by the characters of Odenigbo and Uncle Mbaezi in Half of a Yellow Sun as well as Jason Compson III in The Sound and the Fury. The situations of vulnerability and fragility of the father characters are occasioned by the, often, volatile situation of armed conflict and its aftermath which, in turn, triggers male disempowerment and inability of fathers to, effectively, perform their roles. Faulkner and Adichie's texts function as reminders of the war-induced limitations, masculinemarginalisation and disempowerment of men as fathers, evidenced by the frustration of their protection and breadwinning roles.

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Gandhian Values and Indian English Fiction

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Abstract

This paper explores the impact of Gandhian thoughts on the Indian English Fiction, and how the promulgation of Minutes on Education (1835) established the hegemony of the Western knowledge system over the prevailing system of Indian education. Resultantly, India witnessed a new class of English speaking gentlemen, produced by the English missionary schools to assist the Empire to achieve the much cherished objectives of Macaulay. They were offered important positions in the Imperial set up of government, facilitating British rule in India. Though the first generation Indian writers writing in English imitated the Western authors as their role model and fashioned their writing pattern accordingly, they paved way for their literary successors to embody unjust power dynamics originated with the idea of imperialism. The paper also investigates how the incorporation of Gandhian ideas in oeuvres of illustrious Indian authors provides a plausible picture of constructive influence on masses across all sections of Indian society.

Keywords: Gandhian, Anglo-Indian, hegemony, patriotic

Minutes on Education (1835) by Macaulay paved the way for legally subsiding the Indian languages from academics and administration by privileging English as a desirable mode of instruction in Indian educational institutions. The aim was to establish the hegemony of western knowledge as liberating, and to internalize in the minds of natives its value system as superior to their (native's) own value system. Colonisation was a 'lucrative enterprise' ensuring influx of tremendous treasure from the east to the west

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giving rise to the unbreakable power structure sustained by the body of literature produced by the colonisers. The new class of English speaking gentlemen emerged to assist the much cherished objectives of the Minutes by Macaulay. Their elevation to the level of important posts in imperial set up of government made it easy to rule India. The first generation Indian writers writing in English imitated the Western authors as their role model and fashioned their writing pattern accordingly. The latter half of the 18th century saw a nefarious design of Britain when Queen Victoria became empress of India by ruthlessly repressing Indians. Roughly from 1857 to 1947 country struggled to fracture the shackles tied by British Empire. With the beginning of the twentieth century, the Indian subcontinent witnessed much concentrated anti-colonial stance, giving birth to revolutionary leaders who laid down their lives for freedom. Gandhiji emerged on Indian political horizon in 1915 and shone till his assassination in 1947. He understood the need of the hour and mobilised every section of Indian society. Gandhiji experienced the horribleness of imperialism during his stay in South Africa, which instilled patriotism in his heart. The Indian literati were deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophy which encompassed economic, social, political and religious aspects of Indian life. The famous Anglo-Indian authors incorporating Gandhi's philosophy in their works were Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Raoand R. K. Narayanan. These authors explored the impact of Gandhian thoughts on all sections of Indian society. Gandhi's emphasis on empowering people in rural India by making them self-reliant enables the folk to sustain the struggle for freedom.

There is a dynamic relationship between author and culture. The native culture was diminished and suppressed by the western culture. During freedom struggle, restoring the native culture to its original state became imperative to destabilise the unjust dominant western culture, which justified the necessity of its own for upliftment of Indians. Literature, being a powerful means of approaching people, contributed immensely to galvanised populace into patriotic fervour. The literature during the period provided various dimensions of the personality of Gandhiji. Some social scientists used the term "Gandhian engineering" to reflect the strategy adopted by Gandhiji in bringing everyone together to fight Britishers.

Unlike the 19th century writing, the literary works of the twentieth century were distinct thematically and structurally on account of Gandhian thoughts. He was very clear that India could not achieve freedom without solidarity of its masses, which was only possible by transcending the socio-economic and linguistic boundaries and overpowering divisive forces such as oppression, poverty and unjust caste hierarchy, though these ideals have still not been achieved even after seventy years of his assassination.

Mulk Raj Anand, a renowned English author, came under influence of Gandhi during 1930s and joined him in struggle for freedom and attempted in his novels the plights of poor protagonists who suffered various types of oppressions. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, truth, celibacy, morality and religiosity deeply touches the literary imagination of contemporary Indian writers. The romantic imagination of the 19th century Indian writers remained unsuccessful in touching upon bleak side of

Indian life, which was eventually replaced by the motifs of nationalism and moral identity of nation under Gandhian thoughts. Anand's Untouchable (1935) draws heavily on the Gandhian philosophy, whereby the pangs of untouchable caste are narrated piteously. The novels of Anand initiated a new way of realism and social protest in Indian fiction, portraying the wretched life of downtrodden and the oppressed. The novel was based on a story of a sweeper boy Uka written by Gandhi in 'Young India'. Bringing the idea of inhuman practice of untouchability to the mainstream media. Gandhi preferred the Indian litterateur to write extensively on the subjects that hampered the unison of Indian masses. The story of protagonist Bakha who is son of Lakha, a jamadar, of the whole cantonment area of Bulandshahr a fictional town puts lives of scavengers in perspective. Bakha, a sweeper, was given the work of cleaning three rows of latrine. The novel problematised the acute social inequality but did not suggest the concrete alternative to fight against humiliating caste structure that legitimised upper caste's privilege over downtrodden. This story covers only a day of Bakha's life when he suffered extreme form of caste atrocity, which is tantamount to an act of criminality on the part of upper class.

Bakha is a perceptive young man but a bit proud. His day begins with his father's yelling at him to leave bed and attend the work assigned to him. The father and the son do not show any sign of sound relationship. His indulgence and obsession with Britishers lead the father son relationship tensed. Lower class people are not expected to be indulgent as they do not possess sufficient wealth to sustain their indulgence. Bakha reluctantly attends the work not because his father ordered him to do so but the upper caste Charat Singh's, who is a hockey player and motivates Bakha by giving him a hockey stick as prize, if Bakha cleans his bathroom. Since hockey here symbolises the mark of social upward mobility and status, it makes Bakha happy. Untouchables survive only on the food begged from upper class houses. Sadhus are offered food with respect, but untouchables after doing all scavenging kept in waiting for food. The novel provides readers with the idea of social constructs, as these social systems are man constructed so can be broken by sensitising people. Temple priest Pundit Kali cunningly helps Bakha's sister Sohini in fetching water from a well and instructs her to clean the temple.

Oh, Maharaj! Maharaj! Won't you draw us some water, please? We beg you. We have been waiting here a long time, we will be grateful. Shouted the chorus of voices as they passed towards him; some standing up, bending and joining their palms in beggary, others twisting their lips in various attitudes of servile appeal and abject humility as they remained seated (Anand 23).

This form of exploitation scrutinises the immorality prevailed in society where women of untouchables are sexuality exploited, but if upper caste touches an outcaste, he has to get himself purified by a Brahinin. The oppressive face of dominant castes stands exposed when an innocent untouchable girl becomes a sexual object for so called priest. The untouchables suffer dual oppression. On one hand, they are exploited by colonisers, and on the other, by upper castes. When one realises one's systematic, well-thought out, unjust, brutal exploitation, one begins protesting against the

repression. Bakha gets annoyed when he comes to know his sister's exploitation. He is slept for being impudent; forced to eat leftovers. Distraught and frustrated Bakha does not want to touch the food given by the oppressors. Bakha encounters the humiliations and feels embarrassed. He gets an opportunity to listen to Gandhiji's speech regarding the eradication of untouchability, which is the sole cause of sufferings of downtrodden. He could not understand much of it but hears that flush-toilets would eradicate untouchability. Unfortunately Bakha does not know that untouchabilitycannot be eradicated by introduction of flushing toilets. It requires to be flushed out of brains of upper castes.

Raja Rao wrote a famous novel Kanthapura (1939) depicting the impact of Gandhian thoughts on the lives and ways of inhabitants of a remote village Kanthapura. Through the protagonist Moorthy the practice of Gandhian concepts like non-violence and truth is reflected authentically. The quality of a true leader is found in the character of Moorthy as he embodiesGandhian thoughts. The novel largely draws upon the experimentation of all political, social and economic theories of Gandhiji to uplift the condition of fragmented Indian society. Non-Cooperation, Swaraj, Civil Disobedience are the manifestation of non-violent forms of protest against atrocious Britishers, while eradication of untouchability and alleviation of poverty are forms of social reform. The novel showcases how the consciousness of people in Kanthapura about Gandhiji and his ideals to form a national identity, binds them together under the leadership of Moorthy, Kanthapura is actually a microcosm of whole country. He propagates the ideals of Mahatma by analysing the social malpractices inherent in conventional mode of life that can only be eliminated by educating the masses. Moorthy displays the quality of Gandhian leadership by deeply penetrating the boundaries, which confine masses in various folds of parochial interests. Efforts are made to overpower the ideas of Swami about downtrodden:

Swami is worried over this Pariah movement and he wants to crush it in its seed, before its cactus roots have spread far and wide. You are a Bhatta and your voice is not a sparrow voice in your village, and you should speak to your people and organize a Brahman party. Otherwise Brahmanism is as good as kitchen ashes. The Mahatma is good man and a simple man. But he is making too much of these carcass eating Pariah (Rao 34).

Leader is one who motivates and engenders the trust in hearts of even the weakest. The idea of inclusion and active participation of destitute and hapless untouchables to dispel the centuries old imperial rule is central to the Gandhian thoughts so that every individual will feel free in a free nation. Moorthy is alter ego of Gandhian self of Raja Rao. Murthy endeavours hard to achieve self-governance (Swaraj) for village of Kanthapura. Burning of foreign goods and emphasis on indigenous ways of production such as khaadi clothes exert retrograde force on colonial power. Every household in Kanthapura embarks on holding spinning wheel. Charkha was not only a means of spinning for economic growth, it also had a spiritual benefits. It's soothing effect drains out all types of mental ills by purifying heart and mind which is source of true happiness. "Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all walks of life.

And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings" (Gandhi 447). Moorthy is alter ego of Gandhian self of Raja Rao asleadership requires self-denial and sacrificing mundane through penance.

R. K. Narayan is the third famous novelist exhibiting Gandhian ideals in some of his best literary works. Gandhiji said, "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills" (Gandhi 447). Gandhiji set precedence by practising and experimenting the power of truth and spirituality. In most of the literary works, the author creates a character, who experiences the power of Gandhian ideals. His notable work Waiting for the Mahatma (1955) has Mahatma as a character in the novel and his noble deeds motivate other characters who wholeheartedly devote themselves to the service of the nation. Quit India movement was a concentrated mass agitation to uproot the tyrannical colonial structure. Sriram's denouncing the pleasures of life, staying with Harijan is a Gandhian experiment which was the reality of India. The protagonist transforms into a Satyagrahi. Bharti is another character who was orphan and brought up by Gandhiji himself. Her whole life is shaped by Gandhian ideals. She learns the art of controlling her emotions and experiences the true pleasures of life in self-restraint and self-discipline, whereby attaining the spiritual strength. K.R.S. Iyenger opines, "In Waiting for the Mahatma, the theme is apparently the Bharti-Sriram romance which, however, gains a new dimension in the background of their common allegiance of the Mahatma" (372). Gandhi's relevance in every sphere of human life is very pertinent as R. K. Narayanan's works delineate characters in the light of Gandhian thoughts. A vendor in The Vendor of Sweets (1967) divulges the need of exercising purity even in the dealings of his selling sweets. Purity leads to truth which ultimately brings out real pleasure to self.

With the passage of time, Gandhian thoughts become more relevant as the world has understood the essentiality of his thoughts and ideals to defeat terrorism, sectarianism, war and violence.

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A Comparison of Happiness Metaphors in English and Laki Language: An Iranian Context

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Abstract

The cognitive theory of metaphor has changed our understanding of metaphor as a figurative device to a matter of thought and reasoning. It is approved that metaphors are not only cognitively also culturally motivated. Despite having similar images in some languages, the cultural-specific aspect of happiness metaphors inspired the researchers to explore this area of the metaphoric system in Laki language to investigate how happiness metaphors are reflected in spoken discourse. To achieve this objective, happiness metaphors adopted in English and Laki were collected and analyzed based on the model for emotions introduced by Kövecses (2009) as well as conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). The results showed that the English language and Laki share these: happiness is up, happiness is light, happiness is fluid in a container, and happiness is animalistic behaviour; however, they differ in usage and lack of "happiness is being transferred possession of something".

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor theory, metaphorical expressions, happiness

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Introduction

From a traditional linguistic view, metaphors are defined as decorative literary devices employed for artistic and oratorical purposes. A revolution happened by a work attributed to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003), the metaphor we live by, proposed a conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). CMT refers to conceptual metaphors as a powerful manifestation of people's cognitive mechanism used to understand one abstract domain in terms of another concrete domain; therefore, it is a process of concepts and not of words and an inevitable part of daily human communications (Carroll & Thomas,1982; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Lakoff, 1996; Lakoff & Nunez, 2000; Lakoff, 2004; Lakoff 2006; Lakoff, 2008). In fact, conceptual metaphors are viewed as a demonstration of human experiences and feelings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987; Johnson, 1987).

The study of conceptual metaphor has been of great interest to linguistics based on Lakoff and Johnson's claim that most conceptual metaphors are universal because of the same human physiological properties and feelings called universality of metaphors. Ekman et al. (1972) mentioned that happiness is one of six universal basic human emotions. With all these, very little has been reported on investigating conceptual metaphors in Laki, one of the languages spoken in Iran. Anonby (2005: 2) describes Laki as a vernacular that embraces two dialects; Pish-e KuhLaki and Posht-e KuhLaki. Most linguists consider Lakias a Kurdish dialect, while others discuss that Laki is mostly related to the Kurdish dialect and only minimal differences can be found between Laki and other Southern Kurdish dialects.

Having this in mind, an effort was made to see if the Laki language shares similarities with English. With regard to what has already been stated and based on research objectives, the following research questions were sought to answer:

- 1. What patterns of conceptual metaphor of happiness are employed in Laki language?
- 2. To what extent do happiness metaphors in Laki and English correspond with universal framework?

Literature review

Many comparative studies have been done to investigate the universality of metaphorical expressions of happiness between English and different languages based on a list of metaphors presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2002) and Kövecses (2005) as well. Yu (1995) showed that happiness metaphors in English and Chinese share some similarities such as happiness is "Up", "Light", "Fluid in a container". These similarities showed the universality of metaphors, but these are differences between metaphors of happiness used in English and Chinese. Chinese tends to consider happiness is a flower in the heart. Heart is viewed as a container for happiness, but in English it is rare to utilize heart as a container. The finding of Yu (1995) was confirmed by Liu and Zhao (2013) that metaphors of happiness and sadness between English and Chinese were analyzed to show universality and cultural-specific nature of happiness and sadness

metaphors based on Kövecses's universality of metaphors (2005). In addition to presented happiness is up, light, fluid in a container as the same metaphorical expressions in English and Chinese, it was mentioned that happiness is a flower in a heart used in Chinese and absent in English as presented by Yu's finding (1995). Moreover, Yu (1995) presented similar conceptual metaphors of happiness in Chinese. He stated that all the metaphors of happiness and anger in English as investigated by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) can also be found in the Chinese conceptual metaphor system. Finally, regarding the sadness metaphors the findings of Yu (1995) confirmed the universality and cultural-specific nature of metaphors in English and Chinese as well.

Comparative studies not only have been done between English and Chinese but also have been done between English and other languages. Safarnejad (2014)'s comparative study to show similarities and differences in conceptual happiness metaphors between English and Persian adopted CMT. Findings showed that happiness is UP, Light, Fluid in a Container and animalistic behavior is applied in English and Persian, but differences were revealed that in English, happiness is viewed as extremely energized mode such as dancing, singing. In Persian, happiness is energy reflected in the eyes and happiness is nature that does not exist in English. To do so, Hamdi (2015) investigated universality and culture-specific nature of happiness between English and Tunisian Arabic and Spanish as well based on CMT. Findings showed that happiness is UP in English and Tunisian Arabic but absent in Spanish. In English, happiness is an object that can be possessed as a physical entity but absent in Tunisian Arabic. The similarity among the three languages is that happiness is Being off the ground and Light. The interesting differences are, happiness in Spanish is mapped on as a path, virus, building, medicine, and a flower; however, happiness is conceptualized as heaven in English but in Tunisian Arabic death and crazinessis the conceptualization of happiness. One of the researchers explored happiness metaphor between English and other languages is Csillag's (2016) paper compared metaphors of happiness between English and Russian. Findings showed that English and Russian share happiness is UP, Being off the ground, a Fluid in a Container, Light, and a physiological force but cultural-specific differences are inevitable. In Russian, happiness is an inaccessible object that is absent in English, Recently, Hashemian et. al. (2020) stated that although "there is a certain degree of universality in terms of the predominant conceptual metaphors, there are also variations between the English and Persian for cultural and linguistic reasons" (25). All mentioned studies in this part confirmed that languages share similar conceptual metaphors, but the cultural-specific nature of metaphors of happiness can be mentioned.

Types of metaphors

According to Kövecses (1990), the concept of happiness is characterized by a large number and various types of conceptual metaphors (29). Specifically, three types of conceptual metaphors can be distinguished: general emotion metaphors, metaphors that provide an evaluation of the concept of happiness, and metaphors that provide

much of the phenomenological nature or character of happiness (Kövecses 1991). Furthermore, Kövecses (2017) supported this idea that some conceptual metaphors are common in many languages. He added that "if some kinds of conceptual metaphors are based on embodied experience that is universal, these metaphors should occur in many languages and cultures around the world" (323-325).

The particular conceptual metaphors are given below, each with a linguistic example and according to Kövecses's categorization.

General emotion metaphors of happiness:

Happiness is a fluid in a container. She was bursting with joy.

Happiness is heat/fire. The fire of joy was kindled by the birth of her son.

Happiness is a natural force. I was overwhelmed by joy.

Happiness is a physical force. He was hit by happiness.

Happiness is a social superior. They live a life ruled by happiness.

Happiness is an opponent. She was seized by joy.

Happiness is a captive animal. All joy broke loose as the kids opened their presents.

Happiness is insanity. The crowd went crazy with joy.

Happiness is a force dislocating the self. He was beside himself with joy.

Happiness is a disease. Her good mood was contagious.

The above conceptual metaphors are regarded as general emotion metaphors sinceeveryone applies to some or most emotion concepts, not merely to happiness.

Metaphors providing an evaluation of happiness:

Happiness is light. He was beaming with joy.

Happiness is feeling light (not heavy). I was floating.

Happiness is up. I'm feeling up today.

Happiness is being in heaven. I was in seventh heaven.

The metaphors above provide a highly positive evaluation of the concept of happiness. Having a light, not being weighed down, being up, and being in heaven are all very positive, unlike their opposites (dark, being weighed down, and being down), which characterized the opposite of happiness: sadness, or depression.

Metaphors providing the phenomenological character of happiness:

Happiness is an animal that lives well. I was purring with delight.

Happiness is a pleasurable physical sensation. I was tickled pink.

Happiness is being drunk. It was an intoxicating experience.

Happiness is vitality. He was full of pep.

Happiness is warmth. What she said made me feel warm all over.

These conceptual metaphors give the feeling a tone of happiness, that is, the way happiness feels to the person experiencing it (Barcelona & Soriano, 2004).

Methodology

Data collection

In conducting this study, naturally-occurring happiness expressions in the spoken discourse of Laki language while communicating were analyzed. 19 metaphorical happiness expressions were collected by the researchers. This was practical since the researchers were living among these people and had access to the native speakers of the language every day. The sources of metaphoric language in spoken discourse including folk songs, idioms, and also proverbs were addressed for collecting the data since these sources have been widely used and respected among Laki people since ancient times and were rich sources for collecting the required data. The researchers also used recordings of the folk songs and poems memorized by the old Laki people and this source of data was also scrutinized for the adopted metaphors. By analyzing the recorded songs and other sources, the metaphorical expressions of happiness were elicited and analyzed. All together throughout the study 19 instances of metaphorical expressions were collected. The English metaphorical expressions of happiness were gathered mainly from the works of Lakoff and Kövecses (Lakoff, 1980; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987; Kövecses, 1989). The basic models for emotions introduced in Kövecses (2005) as well as the model of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) were adopted to analyze the data.

Results

To answer the aforementioned research questions and draw conclusions out of the collected data, a classification scheme was designed. Accordingly, metaphors were first grouped under several major categories. Depending on whether they referred to general emotion metaphors, metaphors that provide an evaluation of the concept of happiness, and metaphors that provide much of the phenomenological nature of character of happiness, metaphors were further classified into three groups. Then, every metaphor of happiness was juxtaposed with its English phonetic transcription and literal meaning. In analyzing the data, when Laki metaphorical expressions could be found in English with the same literal meaning and conceptual metaphor, both metaphors were considered as completely equivalent; and the metaphorical expression was considered as dissimilar if it was instantiation of a different conceptual metaphor and not found in the other language. In general, the developed scheme led to five possible categories of metaphorical expressions of happiness.

Discussion

In order to analyze the data, the model of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) was adopted, and from their work, the English samples were taken. According to Lakoff and Turner "metaphors are the principal way we have of conceptualizing abstract concepts" (1989: 52). The concepts of happiness are no exception. The finding of this study disclosed

several metaphorical conceptualizations of happiness in Laki and English. Metaphorical similarities between English and Laki consider happiness as orientational metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:15) have attempted to explain the experiential basis for this kind of metaphor: drooping posture goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state. If one is/going up, one is in a higher location than if one is/goes down; a high location provides the person with a vantage point and consequently with control over other people or things, but a low location involved the subject's inferiority with respect to other people or things. Therefore, high locations are positive (or good) and related to happiness whereas low locations are negative (or bad) and related to sadness (15).

Examples of English metaphors of happiness are:

To perk up, to cheer up, to feel up.

To be on the top of the world, to be over the moon.

To make somebody's day rise, to lift somebody's spirits.

Something gives someone a lift, to boost somebody's spirits.

Somebody's smile keeps someone else soaring, somebody's spirits rise, to be on cloud nine.

When this happens, it yields that to be happy is to be in a high location.

The findings of this study included four expressions of happiness in Laki which come under upward orientational metaphor which induce precisely the same metaphorical concept;

pa/ekhoshi/var/nemaiti

His feet / of happiness / down / do not come.

Literal meaning: His feet do not come down, out of happiness.

Khenjeka/make

Dance up/he does

Literal meaning: He is dancing up.

Bezan/ ha hawawa

As if / he is in the air.

Literal meaning: He is feeling up.

Shesh/ meter/ pari /hawa

Six / meter/ he jumped/ in the air.

Literal meaning: He jumped up six meters, out of happiness.

In the above examples including 'pa e khoshivarnemaiti' (His feet do not come down, out of happiness), 'khenjeka make' (He is dancing up), 'bezan ha hawawa' (He is feeling up), and 'sheshetrpariahawa' (he jumped up six meters, out of happiness), it

can be seen that such terminology is used as upward orientation for the purpose of expressing happiness in Laki. It is revealed that some motion verbs encoding an upward orientation and a jump-like manner of movement sense can undergo metaphorical extension to represent the emotional state of happiness in both languages.

Light metaphor

As Kövecses (1990) states, another concept of happiness in English, is happiness is light. Examples of English metaphorical expressions of happiness as being light are:

Look on the bright sight.

When she heard the news, she lit up.

He radiated joy.

She was glowing with happiness.

Her face was bright with happiness.

She has a sunny smile.

Happiness is light was also found in the collected data regarding Laki language as illustrated by the examples below. The findings of this study included three expressions of happiness is light in Laki language.

Roozh /a ren /bitia

Daylight/ for him/ became

Literal meaning: Daylight came up (for him).

Cha m /o / del / roshen/ bitia

Eye /and/ heart/ light /became

Literal meaning: His eyes and heart lightened up.

Per / mal / noor/ bitia

Full/ house / light/ became

Literal meaning: The house was brightened.

The above examples reveal that in both English and Laki, noteworthy happiness is based on the weather condition. On these occasions, people talk about a weather-related mood. The weather is a visible event that pervades everyday experience and affects our lives. There is, therefore, an experiential correlation between good weather conditions and a good mood. For example, as the first and third metaphors suggest, happiness is related to the sun, as on a sunny day people can leave home and enjoy outdoor activities and have a good day. Regarding the second metaphor, it could be declared that in people's minds. Happiness affects the body members depicting comfort and joy (eyes and heart).

In "cham o del roshenbitia", (his eyes and heart lightened up) "roshen" is identified as a potentially metaphorical item. The contextual meaning of "roshen" refers to a

face lighting up to denote happiness. The non-metaphoric meaning of "roshen" (lit:light) isenergy that brightens things and makes them visible. It could be understood that the basic meaning of "roshen" in Laki is similar to something that stimulates sight such as the sun, as in the English metaphor 'She has a sunny smile' which again refers to weather conditions.

In terms of human physiology, when a person is happy and smiles, the muscles in the face become more relaxed and the mouth widen, giving us a clear picture of the face and a brighter complexion (like the sun). This light metaphor is also very common in the English language and denotes things and emotions that are pleasant.

Container metaphor

Another metaphor working here is a container metaphor; the body is a container for the emotions, as discussed by Kövecses (2000). Examples of English container metaphor of happiness are:

She was bursting with joy.

We were full of joy.

I brimmed over with joy when I saw her.

She could not contain her joy and longer.

He was overflowing with joy. My heart is filled with joy.

As it was found in the data, Laki also adopts container metaphors to express happiness, which can be seen as a fluid in a container. The findings of this study included three expressions of 'happiness is fluid' in a container in Laki;

Lo / per / khanesi

Lips/ full of / laughter

Literal meaning: His lips were full of laughter.

Ja / a / donya / nemawtia

Place/ in / world / cannot contain

Literal meaning: World could not contain him.

Roodaber / bimen

Bowel cut / we became

Literal meaning: We burst into laughter.

Emotional states are conceptualized as bounded areas where change from one place to another realized as motion into or out of a bounded area. A person can move into or out of bounded region (the body or parts of the body). Sometimes it is the emotion that moves- into and out of our bodies; for examples: "ja a donyanemawtia" (world could not contain him). The lips are thought to be the container for our feelings, emotions, and attitudes, as it was revealed in the above example of "lo per khanesi" (His lips were full of laughter.).

In "rodaberbimen" (We burst into laughter.) "rodeber" provides the metaphorical force in the expressions to denote a scene uncontrollable laughter. In Laki, it is common to use a specific body part, such as the bowels to conceptualized abstract entities. This metaphoric expression is also based on the physiology of the body involved in laughing hard which involves the stomach muscle and hence it feels as if our bowels are bursting when we laugh. As a result, a similarity between English and Laki in the conceptual metaphor of happiness is 'fluid in a container.'

Animal metaphor

Another argument by Kövecses (1990) is that a happy person is an animal that lives well. Getting to one's destination in life (considered as success) is the same as living like a happy and satisfied animal (becoming happy). This animalistic metaphor shows the pleasure and enjoyment that a happy person experiences when a person lives in peace and harmony with his environment without being bothered. Here are some examples of an animalistic metaphor of happiness in English:

I was purring with delight.

She was crowing with excitement.

He was happy as a pig in slop.

He is as happy as a clam.

In Laki, following animalistic metaphors of happiness were found.

e / khoshi / bal/ haverde /derera

out of/happiness/ wing/ bring / out

Literal meaning: He evolved two wings out of joy.

khar / keif / make

donkey/pleasure/ he does

Literal meaning: He is happy like a donkey.

agardom/wezh/ gerdoo/ mashkeni

with tail/ self /walnut/ break

Literal meaning: He is performing a duck.

The typical linguistic examples of these metaphors suggest that the person who is intensely joyful/happy is likely to undergo some loss of control; we are overwhelmed, we are seized, we go crazy. It is evident from the data that there are notable similarities between English and Laki in the conceptualization of animalistic behaviour in relation to expressing happiness.

Metaphorical difference between English and Laki regarding happiness

Despite many metaphorical similarities between English and Laki, the researchers found happiness metaphors that were so unique and could not be categorized under

Kövecses's classification. The same body experience and body actions were utilized by both English and Laki, but the cultural differences between languages should not be ignored. Here the researchers provide a new metaphorical concept in Laki which does not exist in the English language. The metaphorical concept of "happiness is being in the possession of something" is not found in English. In Laki, four possession metaphors related to happiness were found:

bezan / donya / dasa / bin

as if /the world/was given/ to him

Literal meaning: It was as if the world was given to him.

biasa / shah / e / jahan

he has become/ the king/ of/ the world

Literal meaning: He has become the king of the world.

bezan/ kori / hatiasa di

as if / his son/ has come to the world

Literal meaning: It was as if his son was born.

sarzamin/e / khodan/ dasa /bin/

land / of / God / was given/ to him

Literal meaning: It was as if God's land was given to him.

In the above examples, happiness is treated as physical entities that can be transferred. Metaphorical transfers of these examples involve giving something to somebody or becoming the owner of something spontaneously as in "sarzamin e khodandasa bin" (it was as if God's land was given to him), "bezandonyandasa bin" (it as if the world was given to him.) which can be traced back to the ancient beliefs of miracles and happiness coming from paranormal blessings. In "bezankorihatiasa di" (It was as if his son was born) the preference of sons over daughters which has been a part of Iranian culture is revealed. Culture dictated that sons were a blessing and daughters a burden and a son is eventually going to be responsible for supporting them in old age.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the happiness metaphors in English and Laki. To achieve this objective, happiness metaphorical expressions adopted in English and Laki were collected and analyzed. With respect to the mentioned happiness metaphors, it can be stated that there are indeed culture-specific differences concerning the way in and the degree to which culture participates in metaphorical mappings found in both languages. These differences may concern the way in which the nature of happiness is conceptualized or the role that a happiness expression plays. Having happiness in mind, English and Laki on one hand share these metaphors: happiness is up, happiness is light, happiness is fluid in a container, and happiness is animalistic behaviour, and on the other hand they differ in usage and lack of 'happiness is being in the possession of something'. Therefore, metaphors with different linguistic representations help us to understand our emotional state. In conclusion, results of this research confirm Lakoff's (1980) theory.

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Environmental Pollution, Terrorism and Combating National Insecurity in Nigerian Literature

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Abstract

Advancement in technology has made the world a global village and the networking activities of terrorists are felt in the entire world. People are living in perpetual terror of death in the hands of abductors and terrorists in many parts of the globe. This paper explores the realistic representation of terrorism and militancy in Nigerian literature. The Boko Haram Insurgents' bombing, abduction and violent killings in the northeast and militants' kidnapping and robbery activities in the south-south have led to growing insecurity in Nigeria. Through literary realism, this study exposes the selfish activities of Nigerian religious and political leaders which encourage the despicable acts with the aim of providing solutions for insecurity. It also advocates for the rule of law to guide the administration of punitive measures on corrupt citizens to reduce terrorists' attacks.

Keywords: Abduction, terrorism, bombing, kidnapping, militancy, violent killings

Introduction

Kidnapping people for ransom has been practiced in Africa since the time of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. From the 16th to 19th centuries, the Europeans came down to Africa to capture and purchase slaves that were taken to Europe to work in plantations. Africans helped to provide their people to the slave masters by kidnapping their own brothers and sisters and exchanging them for money. African writers have represented capturing of slaves and the terror it unleashes on the people in their literary

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works but the themes of slavery and colonial exploitation in postcolonial African literature have been long replaced by that of post independence disillusionment. African leaders have failed to live up to the expectations of the led and very many African novels now discuss political instability, domestic and national violence. Violence has increased the people's fear of kidnappers and abductors who grow by the day in many African nations making terrorism, insecurity, political instability, violence, religious extremism, environmental degradation, militancy, banditry and corruption etc. take over the leading issues in African literary discourse of the 21st century.

The cases of kidnapping, abduction and terrorism keep taking new dimensions in Nigeria everyday that Nigerians are now stigmatized in other countries of the world. Ete (2002) rightly points out that United States impose sanctions on all Nigerians irrespective of their ethnicity and religion (51). For this reason, the fight against crime and corruption has become the priority of the Nigerian government for a positive change. The challenge is that most of the political and religious leaders that claim to be in the forefront of the fight for corruption are corrupt. Creative writers, as prophets, blow the trumpet to warn the people of the danger of crime and corruption which can lead to lawlessness, insecurity and a failing or rogue state if they are not curbed. This study exposes the literary representation of terrorist's and militants' activities in Nigeria and suggests the way forward for an effective combating of insecurity. It aims at providing effective ways to fight against corruption in order to rescue Nigeria from the hands of the few that have hijacked her economy and are bent on destroying the masses as well as advocates that all criminals should be punished enough as a deterrent to others. Kaine Agary's Yellow Yellow (2006) and Obinna Udenwe's Satans and Shaitans (2015) are selected as the primary sources of data collection to highlight the involvement of religious and political leaders in the spread of terrorism in Nigeria; and the cause of militancy and the spread of recent kidnappings from the Niger Delta region to other regions of the country.

Through literary realism, the author's representation of the day to day activities of corrupt leaders, bombing and violent killings by terrorists, abduction and kidnappings of the people by militants, and effects of these social ills are exposed. Literary realism is part of the realist art movement that started in the mid 19th century French and Russian literature. Literary realism is the representation of things the way they are in literature. Jules-Français Felix Fleury-Husson was the first theorist of realism and was among the earliest Realist authors. He wrote under the name Champfleury and his novel *Les bourgeois de Molinchart* (1854) focused on showing the everyday activities and life of the middle or lower class society. The novel aims to reproduce objective reality without romantic idealization and dramatization (*Enyclopedia2.the freedictionary.com Accessed 2017-07-15*). Kaine Agary and Obinna Udenwe employed realism as a technique in the selected novels and its advantage is that of verisimilitude.

To the realist authors, the language of literature is more of everyday language; Agary and Udenwe did not romanticize religious extremism, environmental degradation, terrorism and corruption in the selected texts but represented them the way they are in Nigeria. This can be seen in the religious overtone of the novel, *Satans and Shaitans*

which is used to highlight the significance of its title. 'Satan' is the devil in the Christian religion while 'Shaitan' is the devil in the Islamic religion. It is also seen in Udenwe's use of prophetic declaration in the prologue of the novel. The prologue is the prophecy that reveals the plot of the devil to the two major religious groups in Nigeria, the Christians and the Muslims, that evil is coming in forms of want for power, fame and wealth; rejection of Christianity and fighting the government. The prophecy is a realistic representation of people full of mischief and deceit who are agents of Satan but pretend to be 'men of God' and the interlinking of members of the two religions and their involvement in crime because of their dereliction from the true faith. An allusion is made to the Bible to support the prophecy from Rev 20: 1-3 to assert that the prophecy is the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy of the release of Satan for a while after the millennium. Dates of the day to day records on the investigation of the disappearance of Adeline Chuba and dates in the novel also represent the real dates of the Boko Haram attacks and incessant killings in Nigeria. Complex plots used in the novel to portray the pretentious acts of men who claim to be 'men of God' in southern and northern Nigeria are to show the involvement of religious leaders in Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria. In the same way, the realistic representation of the environmental degradation, corruption and kidnappings in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in Yellow Yellow, is verisimilitude to the experiences of the people of Niger Delta. Expatriate companies and Federal Government's negligence of their responsibilities to the people of Niger Delta expose them to much poverty while the greater percent of the country's income is from oil and gas. Therefore, Literary Realism is relevant to this study.

Moral Bankruptcy, Religious Extremism and Terrorism in Satans and Shaitans

Udenwe in Satans and Shaitans (2015) exposes religious hypocrisy, deception and sexual harassment in Nigeria through the character of Evangelist Chris Chuba, an acclaimed world televange list, in the novel. Chuba is a cultist who offers blood sacrifices every seven years to the grand master of the Sacred Order, for the gift of wealth. Udenwe creates the character, Chuba, to portray the kind of General Overseers of many churches all over Nigeria and other African nations, who get the power they use for miracles from the devil. They are hypocrites and can do anything to gain power and make wealth. They have sold their souls to the devil and that is the reason why in African countries most religious leaders do not speak against corrupt political leaders, rather they invite them to their churches to give them awards and confer titles on them. They pray and prophesy to the politicians what they like to hear while they are busy milking the nations dry. They do all these to get their own shares of the 'national cake'. Udenwe's realistic representation of the ritualistic activities of the religious leaders is to satirize the society for a change. He has done the work of an author as a teacher by re-educating the readers on the nature of religious practices in Nigeria and expects his readers to do theirs by abstaining from occult groups that feed on human blood.

Udenwe presents Chuba so dedicated to the brotherhood that he accepts any demand of the brotherhood without questioning them. Udenwe uses the declarative and authoritative languages of Chief Donald Amechi, the spokesman of the Sacred Order, to intimidate and make Evangelist Chuba submissive. This is portrayed when the brotherhood demands the sacrifice of Chuba's daughter and only child, Adeline. When he is asked by Donald Amechi if offering his daughter is too much to ask of him for making him the wealthiest God's messenger alive and possessing of fame, fortune and success that surpass that of the President of the United States, he responds: "it is but a little sacrifice with tears in his eyes". He has to be submissive because "the voice was never questioned nor argued with when it made such demands" (31).

There is also networking between the Islamic and Christian religious leaders in *Satans and Shaitans*. This is seen in Sheikh Seko and Abouzeid collaboration with Evangelist Chuba. Sheikh Seko and Abouzeid are Muslims, members of the Sacred Order and also members of Islamic Terrorist Organisation who send out the terrorists for training, buy and keep the arms and ammunition purchased from Europe and direct terrorist activities. They get the support and sponsorship from Afghanistan and from their Christian members in the South. Sponsorship from Afghanistan is highlighted in the dialogue between Sheikh Seko and Abouzeid thus: "Yes, different motives and fighting for different causes. But we will bring them into our fold as soon as the backing comes from Afghanistan" (153). Sponsorship from members of the brotherhood from the south is highlighted during one of their meetings that Evangelist Chuba instigates Muslims to kill for Allah. When they try to let him understand that Allah forbids killing, he cites part of the Qu'ran to prove his point:

'Alhaji!' Evangelist Chris Chuba called out. 'Do you say that Holy Qur'an does not support jihad? Do you? Have you read the Holy Book well? Does it not say: "Fight those who do not believe Allah ...? What do we provide you, our brothers, with support we all benefit as brothers" (Udenwe 45).

The Sheikh also preaches the importance of being jihadists to the Muslims during their worships and asks them to be suicide bombers because they would be richly rewarded in paradise. Religious leaders who are supposed to preach peace and unity of the people of Nigeria are instrument of division that enhances insecurity. The Sheikh prepares himself so well before speaking to the youths and in constant practices gets himself ready to convince them to carry out the war in the name of Allah.

He smiled to himself: Everything was possible – all he needed was to believe. No, he smiled to himself; all he needed was to make the five thousand foot soldiers who were loyal to believe this war was in the name of Allah. They did not need any incentives. The money his friends in the South had brought to be used to lure the youths into war had not even been spent. He had simply diverted the money into his Nigerian account (Udenwe 15-16).

With his great oratory, many innocent Muslims are deceived into volunteering to carry out the bombing thinking they are fighting for their faith. These youths think that they are sincerely serving Allah not knowing that they are sincerely wrong: "Before the Sheikh could reply, one of the four soldiers present said, 'Kai! No. I am going to

be one of the first volunteers.' He looked the Sheikh in the eye. 'I will be the first person to await the others in paradise'" (Udenwe 147).

These religious leaders are also presented as mischievous and experts in deceit. Evangelist Chuba deceived his wife, Mrs. Franca Chuba, into marrying him. He first sets up Franca's mother as a thief and rescues her from being burnt alive thinking that, that will be enough for Franca to change her mind and agree to marry him. "His plan only partially worked – Franca's mother pleaded with her daughter to marry the Evangelist but Franca still refused" (124). He then sets Franca up as a murderer and also rescues her from being hanged and gets her marry him. "Marry me, I told you God has destined us to be together. I was in time to save your mother and in time to save you" (125). The set ups portray the way and manner political and religious leaders set up themselves in order to achieve their goals. Many innocent citizens have lost their lives because they are set up by the leaders.

Evangelist Chuba is also presented forcing himself on his wife almost every night and beating her up if she shows any kind of resistance: "Although she loved her husband, there are three things she could not excuse: his treatment of Adeline, their only child, the beatings she received from her husband, and his aggressive style of lovemaking" (125). An acclaimed Evangelist to be involved in domestic violence is the height of hypocrisy. Forceful sexual intercourse in marriage is rape and Udenwe presents this to highlight much domestic violence by Nigerian men and how women have little or no right in Africa. Nawal El Saadawi in an online interview (2017) rightly puts it that: "marital rape is more serious than other rape because it is veiled by love and divine law" (152).

In the end of the novel it is revealed that Evangelist Chuba's cook, Miss Spencer, is also his mistress (275-276). Evangelist Chris Chuba, an acclaimed world televangelist upon his 'holier than thou' attitude lives with his mistress disguised as a cook. The representation of his immoral life is to expose immoral lives of political and religious leaders in Nigeria who keep many mistresses. Most of them build mansions and buy cars for their undergraduate girlfriends who are even younger than their daughters and take them to trips abroad. They do not care if their wives are aware of their infidelity or not. Muslims among them marry even children and whenever they feel that their young wives are no more attractive as they like, they keep marrying younger ones.

Udenwe also presents the desperation of Evangelist Chuba and Chief Amechi to control the government of the country. It is this desperation that leads them to plot with an Islamic Terrorist Organisation in the North into bombing attacks to undermine the Nigerian President. They convinced the Islamic Terrorist Organisation by promising that if they take control of the government, the organisation would be allowed Islamic rule in the country. This is to satirize politics in Nigeria which is characterized by the politicians' selfish interests. The Organisation agrees and makes themselves instruments of destruction in order to achieve their goal. They smuggle into the country arms and ammunition through religious leaders who the security forces would not suspect to be involved in such criminal acts.

Chief Donald Amechi spoke, 'Sheikh Seko, a week from today, Sheikh Kabiru Ibrahim here and Alhaji Damba Tambuwal will contact you. You will receive twenty million naira. You know what to do with it. Evangelist Chuba will commence a West African evangelist mission in two weeks' time. He will travel along the Trans-Saharan highway on his way back to Nigeria, through the Jibya border. He will hold his final crusade in Katsina State. With him will be the arms that are being held in Mali.'

'How will he transport them to us?'

'Do not worry. Not even the American Marines if they are on the border will bat an eye as his entourage passes through. He is a renowned man of God, Very renowned (Udenwe 48).

This is also to highlight porous Nigeria borders that aid the smuggling of arms and ammunition into the country. Udenwe, in portraying the bombings and killings in Nigeria engineered by politicians, is sending an open letter to them to desist from such evil acts. It is to create a revolutionary consciousness in the masses.

To carry out their plot to control the nation, the Sacred Order members in the novel kill everybody who stands on their way and when their hired assassins become intoxicated with the power to kill, they start killing members of the cult too. Extending the killings to members of the Sacred Order in the novel shows how power drunk leaders eliminate one another secretly. In one of their meetings, this is highlighted through their verbal attacks on one another. Evangelist Chuba cries: "I lost everything, my daughter, my brother at the hand of Malik Hassan. Yet I was betrayed" (287). Professor Musa stands up, walks to him lamenting of his own loss:

You claim to be holy eh? You claim to be the only good one, eh? ... Sheikh Seko abandoned the plot and is killing everyone. The Secret Order made me sacrifice my family. What about you? What about your people? His voice towered over to Evangelist in his rage, 'You deceived us to establish a terrorist organisation in the north. In our own land! You had us use our religion in order to destroy it! Your plots are killing our people, men, women, and children. Alhaji Umar, Hassan, Alhaji Abu Rabiu Mukhtar, Seik Kabiru Ibrahim ... name them, we lose our lives and property in thousands and millions ... yet you dare open your rotten mouth to talk about your miserable prostitute of a daughter and criminal of a brother' (Udenwe 287-288).

Udenwe's realistic representation of the loss and killings and the predicaments of the people through his use of energized or literary language are to prick the conscience of the people who delight in evil and cause them to change and amend their ways to promote peaceful and harmonious co-existence in the society. Members of the brotherhood regret their crimes when it is already too late. This reminds readers that 'had I known' awaits all criminals.

The beast in the members of the Sacred Order is also revealed through the way and manner Chief Donald Amechi presents the demand for the sacrifice of Chuba's only child, Adeline. He first reminds Evangelist Chuba of what he has benefited from the cult: "There is no country in the world where hundreds of thousands of people of various religions do not lie at your feet to receive your miracles and wonders... all this the Sacred Order did for you" (30). He then smiles at his friend's pain and grief and turns to leave saying: "Brother. What will be, will be. Wait no longer or you will dance to the music. That is the message from the Universal Temple. My duty is to deliver it, brother" (31). One would begin to wonder, what kind of brotherhood is this that rejoices at a member's grief? But, this is a true representation of how most African politicians are hypocrites. Chief Amechi smiles in the successful execution of his plan to eliminate Adeline when he notices that his son, Danaldo is showing interest in her because he does not want to hear that Donaldo is in love with her. Udenwe brings to the limelight the selfish motives behind some of the actions that lead to destruction and violent killings in Nigeria. The hypocritical nature of the politicians is also revealed in Evangelist Chuba employing of expert investigators to search for Adeline. He is not interested in rescuing his only child. He thinks that kidnappers, the Brotherhood has sent to abduct Adeline, have carried out their assignment. He is just pretending to be searching for Adeline to cover up his crime.

Before Evangelist Chuba sacrifices his daughter, Adeline gets missing and the entire members of Chuba household are in agony. Evangelist Chuba becomes worried when he gets the message of the kidnappers' death in an auto accident. His worry is on what the Brotherhood would do to him, on finding out that their demand would not be met. Chief Donald goes to his house to discuss the matter.

'It means your daughter is alive. Somewhere'

'Chief Donald.... help me, Help your friend. What do I do now?

The Chief stammered. 'I - I am confused as you are. The men died on their way. Yet Adeline is missing. So where is she? I have asked myself the question a million times, Chris. Where is she? I do not know what to tell you. Honestly, I do not know.'

'God!' Chris Chuba inhaled deeply. The tears in his eyes stung him. He knew a great punishment, a great painful chastisement awaited him in just a few days if the sacrifice wasn't performed (Udenwe 34).

Udenwe uses the murder and the search of Adeline to expose more killings in Nigeria which reveal that despite the fact that the military and the police force, as security agencies, fight robbery and kidnapping in the country, some of the greedy security officers aid armed robbery and kidnapping to make money. The investigation on the sudden disappearance of Adeline in *Satans and Shaitans* also leads to the exposure of the corrupt security forces in the country. Chief Amechi and Evangelist Chuba know all the chief security officers and will always ask for their services whenever the need arises. The security officers are their men and they do not try to investigate the source of the income of the two men. Chief Amechi calls the Commissioner of Police and requests for the urgent assistance of a forensic investigator on finding out that Donaldo, his son may be involved in the killing of the missing Adeline Chuba (255). He bribes the investigator who first finds Adeline's corpse to conceal the murderer

of the young girls when he finally finds out that Donaldo murdered her. This depicts how political and religious leaders plant their own men in strategic offices so that their evil acts would be concealed. Evangelist Chuba also picks up arms for the Sacred Order but he has never been investigated because he is a well known world acclaimed televangelist. Chief Amechi and Evangelist Chuba's influence over the security officers depicts how Nigerian rich politicians are exonerated from punishment for the numerous crimes they commit. Politicians who siphon the nation's economy are not brought to book but a common man is jailed for minor theft.

Chief Amechi's secret use of the forensic investigator also shows how security officers obey the political leaders without questioning the motive behind their actions. The Commissioner of Police obeyed without hesitation because Chris Chuba and Chief Amechi are his friends. If any of the security officers is found to go against the political leaders, he has to pay with his life. In the novel, when it is known that Chief Amechi employed a forensic investigator, Evangelist Chuba immediately orders for the apprehension of the forensic investigator. Kwame, the foreign investigator from Ghana, is surprised on the treatment, Evangelist Chuba's bodyguards give to the captured forensic investigator; "his head covered with a black hood that smelled of sweat and blood. His mouth was stuffed with his own handkerchief. They had tied his hands and feet" (256).

The Commissioner would not refuse the Evangelist anything, especially as "his friend Chief Amechi was instrumental to his becoming commissioner and arranging his transfer to Ebonyi State" (255). The abducted forensic investigator and what he passed through in the hands of Evangelist Chuba's bodyguards portray how religious and political leaders in Nigeria use and dump the masses in solving their personal problems. When they feel that their criminal acts could be revealed by the people who work for them or their thugs, they eliminate them by silencing them forever: "... one of the bodyguards pulled out his semi-automatic pistol and shot the hooded man in the head at close range" (256). This reveals how political and religious leaders command the killing of citizens of the country. People are jailed and killed everyday in Nigeria but government pretends not to hear the cry of the masses for insecurity because they mastermind most of the killings. Ibezim-Ohaeri's "Confronting Close Civic Spaces in Nigeria" (2017) in support of this, points out how bloggers or activists are arrested and detained in Nigeria for publishing the crime committed by the government. She highlights on government refusal to obey the orders of proper constituted court of law in Nigeria (132).

Bombings and killings by members of the Sacred Order in the novel is to expose incessant bombing attacks carried out by the terrorist sect, Boko Haram, in Nigeria and traces its roots from activities of the nation's selfish and greedy political and religious leaders. Boko Haram insurgents have destroyed lives and property in Nigeria and rendered many homeless. The displaced victims live by the mercies of goodwilled men, Non Governmental Organizations and both the States and Federal Government. Udenwe presents it thus:

'The things you asked for from Sheikh Kabiru Ibrahim arrived today in a truck. The brothers in the South made arrangement for plenty' the Sheikh told Shedrack.

'Alhamdulillah! And you are sure they have everything? The ammonium nitrate fertilizer, the black powder, the sodium chlorate ... everything I need to make a C-4 bomb?'

They delivery is there, they said they have it all' (144).

Onuoha's "The Islamist Challenge: Nigeria's Boko Haram Crisis Explained" (2010); Bamidele's "Domestic Terrorism in Nigeria" (2013) and Darma and Others "The Trinity Violence in Nigeria" (2016) assert that the series of Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria have placed it in media spotlight both locally and internationally and the number of deaths increases every year in some of the 19 states of Northern Nigeria. Ehawarieme and Umukoro's in their article, "Civil Society and Terrorism in Nigeria" (2015) reveal that Boko Haram's activities have adverse effects on the social and economic life of people in Nigeria, especially those living in the North east. It has crippled educational activities in most parts of Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe States (30).

The Sacred Order of Unified Forces members employ the services of Simon Chuba, the younger brother of Evangelist Chris Chuba as their assassin. Simon was a cultist and a founder of the Black Scorpion, another cultist group, in his secondary school days. He kills a lot of prominent people for them and they pay him richly. This highlights how religious and political leaders encourage, use and protect cultists. Simon is paid to kill Minister of Justice in the novel. Malik Hassan, the younger brother of Alhaji Umar Hassan, another member of the Order in the North is another assassin in the novel but he is not hired. Malik kills members of Order for revenge for the murder of his brother. His killing of Alhaji Abu Rabiu Mukhtar is presented: "Alhaji Mukhtar! This is for Umar Hassan!" the assassin shouted and fired four times into the man's head (163). He also kills Prof. Saturday Effiong:

The Professor's security guard, who doubled as the gateman and who had admitted the men, convinced that they were doctors, saw what happened. ...Another bodyguard ran out from the quarters, carrying an AK-47. But the tall assassin – Malik Hassan – was already close by, and before the bodyguard could fire a shot, he was gunned down (Udenwe 164).

Nigerian Government also pays ransom to the Boko Haram insurgent and bandits to release their abductees instead of fighting them to eradicate the set in Nigeria. When these terrorists are paid by the government, they increase their terrorist attacks to receive more money. Serial killing is presented in the novel through the character of Donaldo Amechi to revenge of his mother, Christiana and his lover, Adeline. It is true that Donaldo murdered Adeline by himself but he is forced to kill her because of situation he finds himself; the fear of his father Chief Donaldo who does not want her in his life made him murder her. Donaldo finds himself in a dilemma of accepting and taking responsibility of Adeline Chuba's pregnancy or killing her to conceal their shared love experiences for ever. Therefore, it is the wickedness of his father on him that

turns him into a serial killer. He lost his innocence by the way he was brought up. He kills Simon Chuba for raping Adeline, his love:

This is for you trying to rape Adeline' Donaldo growled, spittle flying out of his mouth in his rage. He stabbed the dying man once more in the groin. Simon Chuba's eyes bulged, he tried to scream but there was nothing but a gurgle as he choked and drowned in his own blood (Udenwe 214).

Donaldo also kills his father, Chief Donald Amechi, in revenge for his mother, Christiana's murder and his making him kill his love, Adeline, and his unborn child. He lets loose the content of his heart to his father before killing him:

I hate you just like you hate me. You confined me in a small space. Now I am a fool. I am anti-social. A dullard. I know nothing. How do you think I'd behave, like a saint? You built the monster in me. You made me like this... You made me kill Adeline, You with your twisted ideas about women, about my art and my future. Oh how I loved her, and you made me kill her (Udenwe 242-243).

He vows to kill everyone who has in one way or the other made him kill Adeline. He proudly confesses: "And you know what, I killed Simon too! And I won't stop until I get revenge for me and Adeline, and for our baby" (243). Chief Donald Amechi becomes terrified when he sees madness in his son's eyes. Donaldo runs out from his father only to come back when his father is asleep to end his life. Donaldo then uses the pillow to suffocate his father who is drunk and hurries out of the room: "Donaldo leaned away from him, avoiding the thrashing hands and legs, 'this is for Christiana – for killing my mother and her baby,' he hissed, 'and for ruining my life'" (245). Donaldo is arrested for all who he has killed. He died before his condemnation. He allows his kidney to fail by refusing to take drugs. Udenwe representation of terrorism in Nigeria exposes the cannibalistic and brutal nature of politicians in Nigeria.

Negligence, Environmental Degradation and Militancy in *Yellow Yellow*

Kaine Agary in *Yellow Yellow* criticizes the contemporary Nigerian society which is facing terrible environmental degradation due to the undermining of minority groups by the Federal Government. Non-inclusive politics played in Nigeria as seen in the case of the Niger Delta region and people of Nigeria is the major theme of the novel and Kaine Agary from Niger Delta, is motivated to write this novel, *Yellow Yellow* by the environmental degradation of her State due to oil spillage which is presented thus:

I left them and ran to my mother's farm. It was the first time I saw what crude oil looked like. I watched as the thick liquid spread out, covering more land and drowning small animals in its path. It just kept spreading and I wondered of it would stop, when it would stop, how it would spread. Then there was the smell. I can't describe it but it was strong—so strong it made my head hurt and turned my stomach. I bent over, and retched so hard I became dizzy. It felt like everything had turned to black and was spinning

around me. There was so much oil, and we could do nothing with it-viscous oil that would not dry out, black oil that was knee-deep. I stayed there, in a daze, until someone shouted at me, 'You no go commot for there? You de look like say na beta tin'! Come on, leave dat place!' (Agary 4)

The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine others from Ogoni land for speaking about the neglect of their people by the Nigerian Government is also another thing that gave Kaine Agary inspiration to write this novel. She satirizes the government for killings in Nigeria, especially the ill done to her people.

It was the year after the government hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with nine other Ogonis, for inciting an insurrection that led to the deaths of four elders in Ogoni land. Every young boy had visions of dying valiantly for the cause, as Ken Saro-Wiwa just had and as Isaac Adaka Boro had done nearly thirty years before him. The reports were that Ken Saro-Wiwa's last words on the day of his execution were, 'Lord, take my soul, but the struggle continues' (Agary 34).

Oil from Niger Delta gives Nigeria a greater percentage of her income, yet the people are poor and the place underdeveloped. One may wonder why such a vital revenue generating region is neglected and marginalized, but, the decision of the materialistic military and civilian politicians for their selfish interest has made it so. The Nigeria/Biafra War brought much division and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria that these greedy politicians used the opportunity to divert public funds into their pockets. The Federal Government devised a means to directly control the oil economy in the Southeast. They stopped the sharing of the revenue of the country in a way that some percentages go to each region according to its contribution to national economy. E. D. Simon, J. E. Akung and B. U. Bassey's "Environmental Degradation, Militancy/Kidnapping and Oil Theft in Helon Habila's *Oil in Water*" (2014) point out that:

After the 1967-70 Nigeria/Biafra Civil War, new states were created and, family lands were taken over by the Federal Government. The 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended represents this thus: The entire property in and in control of minerals, oil and natural gas in, under and upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zones of Nigeria shall vest in the government of the federation and shall be managed in such a manner as may be prescribed by the national Assembly (clause 44). Thus this brought to an end the derivation sharing principle and introduced the domination and marginalization of the Niger Delta (384).

This is to portray bad leadership in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria and the oil companies are ultimately responsible for the development of Niger Delta region. The political situation in Nigeria is that the leaders do not care about the problems of the masses. They only care on how to embezzle government funds. They send their children to European countries to study, deposit the money they siphon from the nation's treasury in banks in Europe and America while the masses are left to suffer in poverty. Economy and security are interwoven; they are connected and

cannot be separated. When a country's economy is bad and people cannot feed themselves, they go into crimes to survive. Federal Government's compliance with the expatriate companies to embezzle oil money in Nigeria portrayed in the Yellow Yellow highlights how the companies, just like Nigerian leaders, are interested in the money they get from oil and not about the welfare of the people. Politicians from Ijaw and Itsekiri, the two dominant ethnic groups in Niger Delta, are bribed by the government and oil companies to silence them. They are always in constant fight over sharing the money they collect in the city of Port Harcourt while their brothers and sisters are abandoned to die in poverty in their communities (109-110). Freidman's "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits" (1970); Yekini's "Corporative Community Involvement Disclosure" (2012a and 2012b) and Uzonwanne's "An Evaluation of Prospective of Sustainability of Reporting in Nigeria Oil Industry" (2014) point out the negativity impact on the government and the oil companies because of ignoring the group community stakeholders. They stress that oil corporates have an undeniable responsibility towards the operating communities and environments. In other parts of the world, it is the government that creates the enabling environment for sustainable operations. The result of the neglect is that Niger Delta youths form militant groups, abduct and kidnap both the locals and expatriates and demand ransoms for their release. From this, armed robbery and kidnapping cases increase daily in Nigeria. Helon Habila's Oil on Water (2010) presents abductions, kidnapping by the militants and violent killings of militants and the people of Niger Delta by Nigeria soldiers. As militants and soldiers fight over dominance in Niger Delta, the citizens become the victims. Obarisiagbon and Aderinto's "Kidnapping and the Challenges Confronting the Administration of Criminal Justice in Selected States of Nigeria" (2018) rightly put it that:

The current dimension of kidnapping became alarming in the Niger Delta region when militants in February, 2006, abducted some oil workers ostensibly to draw global attention to the deplorable situation in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of the country. Since then, kidnapping has spread to most parts of the country, especially the south-eastern and south-southern regions of Nigeria. The targets are no longer oil workers or foreigners alone; every Nigerian is now a target (42).

The problem of the oil spillage issue in Niger Delta can be seen as both political and physiological. It involves the function and activities of life or life organisms. Every living thing in Niger Delta is affected – crops, fishes and human beings find it difficult to survive. Milbourne's "African Photography and the Look of (Un)Sustainability in African Landscape" (2014); Agbalagba and others "Evaluation of Natural Occurring Radioactivity Material (NORM) of Soil and Sediments in Oil and Gas in Western Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" (2013); Gbedebo and others "Environmental impacts of drilling mud and cutting waste from Igbokoda Onshore oil wells Southeast Nigeria" (2010); Arogunjo and others "Dose Rate Assessment of Terrestrial Gama Radiation in the Delta Region of Nigeria" (2004), and Arogunjo and others "Levels of Natural Radionuclides in Some Nigerian Cereals and Tubers" (2005) highlight that, release of

gas through oil spillage in Niger Delta has serious radiological and hazardous effects on men and direct impact on the soil. Close contact, inhalation and ingestion of radionuclides have a harmful effect on living organisms including humans and the level of radionuclides in some Nigerian cereals and tubers increases due to oil spillage. Agbalagba and others argue that the radiation from sludge and sediments from soil sediments in Niger Delta pose radiological threats not only to the people in Niger Delta but to people beyond. They further stress that contamination and pollution damage may be extensive and effects may be of long term and extend over many seasons (2614). Nigerian Government and the foreign companies abandon the people to die in poverty being exposed to danger from the chemicals.

Environmental pollution in Niger Delta also translates to moral pollution too. The reason why Zelayefa is called Yellow Yellow in the novel is that she is a product of a Greek father and an Ijaw mother. Men all over the world come to Niger Delta for business because of sea ports. Some of the women are impregnated by men who have returned to their countries and they have children who do not know what their fathers look like. This is the predicament of Zelayefa's mother; a single mother and her daughter struggling to survive. Zelayefa strives to understand who she really is and why there are many of her kind (yellow skin) in Port Harcourt. This depicts how the environmental pollution has caused single parenting and hardship to the citizens in Niger Delta, Nigeria. In her hometown, everybody accepts Zelayefa and calls her Yellow Yellow but in Port Harcourt a person of mixed race is looked down upon. They see the person as loose as her mother and men abuse them sexually. The notion of people of mixed race in the city is that they "were conceited, promiscuous, undisciplined and confused" (74). This makes her feel ashamed of being regarded as a 'born-troway'. Abiove and Ajibove in "A Lexico-Stylistic Analysis of Kaine Agary's Yellow Yellow" (2014) rightly put it that Zelayefa "struggled to find an identity for herself in Port Harcourt where she faced racial prejudice and she went through a phase of life where she had to deal with the opposite sex" (115-116).

The absence of a father figure compels Zelayefa to trust Retired Admiral Kenneth Alaowei Amalayefa who emotionally abused her and ruined her life. Admiral, a man of sixty years, who is old enough to be her grand father impregnates her, just gives her money to abort the baby and leaves her to suffer the trauma alone. The Admiral's action depicts the attitude of men in a typical male oriented African society. Zelayefa trusts him and thinks she would get fatherly protection from him, but the abortion experience almost kills her. Agary presents her unpleasant experience to show the trauma of young girls abused sexually. Sexual and emotional abuse by the corrupt politicians in Nigeria is rampant. Politicians measure their success by the number of women they take to trips abroad to squander the money they steal from the national treasury. Young girls believe the politicians' lies and some of the politicians even use them for rituals. Agary also uses the Admiral to publicize the patriarchal decadence in Nigeria which turns women into 'used and dumped' objects. She, as a writer, has done her job well to warn women of the danger of falling to the tricks of these

corrupt, shameless and selfish politicians. It is therefore left for the women who read this novel to either learn from the ugly experiences of Zelayefa or not.

The Significance of the Realistic Representation of the Societal Crimes in the Selected Texts

The selected authors' realistic approach in satirizing the social ills in Nigerian society exposes the psychological trauma Nigerians are passing through in the hands of the self-centred politicians. Udenwe's realistic representation of terrorism and other criminal acts in Satans and Shaitans, to expose the activities of the political and religious leaders serves as an open letter to Nigerian politicians to checkmate themselves. Agary's use of language in this novel, Yellow Yellow demonstrates her goal to reach an audience weighed down by public ills and raise social awareness for the world to know what is happening in Niger Delta. These novelists' realistic representation of terrorism and the criminal acts of leaders in Nigeria is to make Nigerians bring perpetrators of crime to book. In Nigeria the politicians are immune from prosecution. They hide under the ruling political party to conceal their criminal acts. Politicians change political parties as if they are changing dirty clothes. The defection from the opposition party to the ruling party and vice versa that is ongoing in Nigeria is to protect those politicians from their numerous crimes should be checked. If Nigeria really wants to fight corruption and insecurity, anybody who is involved in criminal acts must be severely punished whether he is a leader or the led. This would instigate fear on those that might nurse the ideas of joining the bandwagon of crime.

Agary's realistic representation of sexual escapades with young girls by men who are old enough to be their grandfathers in the society creates a consciousness on the people to fight against child and sexual/emotional abuse. It also creates awareness on the young girls to be wiser in going into relationships that will ruin their lives. Her realistic representation of the Nigerian Government's compliance with expatriate oil companies in exploiting and neglecting of Niger Delta environmental degradation is also to create awareness on foreign investors to abstain from fostering corruption in Nigeria. This representation of money laundering activities of Nigerian politicians depicts the ways and manner European countries in subtle ways foster corruption in Nigeria and Africa. Its representation will help countries of the world to restore Nigerian stolen monies in their countries. This will bring the change in the society too.

Conclusion

Through the use of energized or literary language, the two authors have satirized the Nigerian society. The language, the authors use in the selected works, is so captivating that the readers feel a force ordering them to rise up and fight crime and corruption. The authors' realistic representation of involvement of the leaders in the violent killings in the country reveals the burden in their hearts. The portrayal of the religious leaders' luring the youths into bombing and killings makes the audience to feel what the writers feel. Therefore the language of the authors is so persuasive and calls the readers to action. Nigerian authors as revolutionaries have fulfilled their own part of the fight

against terrorism in Nigeria in their texts. They have also succeeded in ushering in a revolutionary inclination in the people. It is now left for the readers who have to know the evil intension of the leaders to shun crime and corruption; rise up and execute their own part of the fight by calling for social reconstruction of Nigeria for effective democratic governance.

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Girish Karnad's Play *The Fire and the Rain*: A Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract

Cultural critiques of the imperialism and its consequences on the culture of the colonised communities are designated as postcolonialism. The term postcolonialism refers to the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture and human identity are represented in the modern era after many colonised countries got independence. The term "postcolonial" has become a convenient term to describe any kind of resistance against class, race, and gender oppression. Girish Karnad in his play The Fire and the Rain (1998), raises the issues like women's subordination and their identity, male hegemony, caste system, grievances of the marginalised, issue of subaltern, and also the degeneration of morality. Vishakha and Nittilai are two prominent women characters delineated as the victims of the conventional norms of the patriarchal society. The playwright uses the myth of Yavakri and Parayasu which occurs in chapters 135-38 of Vana Parya (Forest Canto) of the *Mahabharata* to deal with the contemporary problems of Indian society. He has made changes in the original myth also to serve his purpose. For instance, Raibhya and Bhardwaja are brothers in his play but in the original myth they are friends. He has added the episode of Nittilai and a play within the play, and so on. This research paper attempts to study The Fire and the Rain in the light of postcolonial perspective.

Keywords: Exploitation, individuality, postcolonialism, atriarchy, rights, subjugation

Girish Karnad is a celebrated and multifarious writer, poet, playwright, film actor, director and film producer. He is one of the greatest dramatists in Indian English literature, who will be remembered for his invaluable contribution to Indian English Drama. He has introduced a set of new parameters in the domain of drama and

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"reshaped Indian theatre as a major national institution in the later 20th century." (Dharwadkar, *Firstpost*) A number of prestigious awards have been conferred on him like Padma Shree (1974), Padma Bhushan (1992), the Sahitya Akademi Award (1994) and, the Jnanpith Award (1998), the highest literary award in India. His prominent contributions to English drama are *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1972), *Naga Mandala* (1988), *Tale- Danda* (1993) and *The Fire and the Rain* (1998). *The Fire and the Rain* is considered as Karnad's most complex play.

The cultural critiques are concerned with experiences of cultural, political, social and economic exploitations of the colonised and the resistance of the colonised against the colonial rule with an avowed aim of transformation. Defining "Postcolonial" Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin maintain that "We use the term Postcolonial …. to cover all cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to present day" (*The Empire* 2).

Postcolonialism is a name for critical theoretical approach in literary and critical studies. It is also designated as a politics of resistance to unjust and unequal forms of political and cultural authority. In other words it is a broad cultural approach to study the power relations between different groups and cultures wherein language, literature, traditions and faith make vital contributions.

Prominent thinkers of postcolonial theory in academic discourse are Edward Said, Franz Fanon, Chinua Achebe, Bill Ashcroft, Homi K. Bhabha, Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spivak in her critical essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" raises the issue of subaltern or the oppressed. Generally the term subaltern refers to the poor and marginalized people in any country. Spivak has a theoretical look at the subaltern and this critical work is a prominent text for a discussion of subaltern. By subaltern she meant "the oppressed subject, non-elite social class, groupings like proletariat, tribals, downtrodden and outcaste, untouchables and even women" (Navin 36-37). She defines the "subaltern" as "a person without lines of social mobility" (Ashcroft et al., The Post-Colonial 28). She observes, "the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant" and "the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Ashcroft et al., The Post-Colonial 32). Peter Childs and Patrick Williams maintain that subaltern is more generally used as "a name for the general attributes of subordination in South Asian society" often expressed in terms of gender and caste (161). It can be said that they cannot speak up as they are divided by class, caste, gender, region and religion, and they have no platform to express their concerns. "She (Spivak) laments that women have not been offered their due space; instead they have been subordinated in the traditional structures" (Navin 37).

Postcoloniality may be described as the historical, cultural, political and actual living conditions of the newly independent nations which were the colonies of the Europeans for years. It incorporates the questions of identity, alienation, moral code, mythological orientation, gender placement, metaphysical dualism, etc. within its fold. *The Fire and the Rain*, which is based on Indian mythology, has a postcolonial stature. It exposes male chauvinism, the exploitation and oppression of women and injustice

done to them in the male dominated society. It raises the questions of women's subordination, and their craving for freedom and identity. Moreover, Karnad questions the authenticity of patriarchal values and traditions, and raises issues related to devilish caste system, sufferings of the marginalised, and also the deterioration of morality in society.

Karnad uses Indian myths in his plays to address the contemporary problems faced by Indian society. C. L. Khatri aptly remarks about Karnad's use of Indian myths in his plays, "He makes good use of Indian mythology in his plays and finds parables for contemporary situations. He picks up stories and characters from Indian mythology and history, and through them he dramatizes the contemporary realities" (5). For instance, in his play *Naga Mandala* Karnad takes up the oral tales of Karnatka to address women's issues like their subjugation to patriarchal hegemony. It exhibits the miseries of women. Rani, the leading character of the play, is suppressed by her husband and forced to stay inside the four walls of the house. At the end of the play Rani is liberated and achieves her identity in the family and society.

The Fire and the Rain was first written in Kannada titled Agni Mattu Male in 1995. Later, it was translated into English by Karnad himself. Thus it is a transcreation. This play is based on the myth of Yavakri and Paravasu, described in the chapters 135-138 of Vana Parva (Forest Canto) of the Mahabharata. It was narrated by the sage Lomasha to the Pandavas when they were in exile and wandering across the land. The objective was to give lessons about the dangers of false knowledge and evils resulting from lust, jealousy, revenge, pride, anger etc. In other words, it is about the dangers of knowledge without wisdom. In the story of the Mahabharata Raibhya and Bhardwaja are two learned Brahmin friends, who also possess spiritual power. Raibhya has two sons Paravasu and Arvasu, and Bhardwaja has one son Yavakri. However, the playwright has made several changes and additions in the original myth to serve his purpose. For example, in the original story Raibhya and Bhardwaja are friends but Karnad presents them as brothers. He has added the Nittilai episode in this play. He has included a play within the play in the Epilogue. These are a few examples. He has taken up the myth to depict the present problems of society.

Karnad focuses on men-women relationship, problems of women folk, their predicament and their attempt for assertion for individuality in Indian patriarchal society through this dramatic art -*The Fire and the Rain*. There are some practices/institutions in Indian society which prove to be exploitative for women. He has used this myth to address the contemporary problems related to women in Indian society.

Vishakha and Nittilai are two prominent female characters in the play who become the victims of patriarchal hegemony. Through these characters the playwright throws light on how women are shackled in social conventions which curtail their freedom and deny their individuality. Women have been expected to strictly follow the traditions and norms of the patriarchal society since centuries and the breach of the same invites sufferings and even death.

Vishakha is a twenty six year old Brahmin woman who loves Yavakri, the son of Bhardwaja. Yavakri is enraged because his father has not been given due recognition

and regard in the society. Raibhya is made the royal priest and his father is ignored. He has grudge against society and especially Raibhya's family. So he goes to forest for meditation and austere penance for ten years in order to gain knowledge of the Vedas. In his absence, Vishakha is married off to Paravasu, the elder son of Raibhya despite her unwillingness. She has to obey her father's decision in marrying Paravasu., and tells Yavakri, "Yes, Father was happy. I was married off to Paravasu. I didn't want to, but that didn't matter" (Karnad 14).

Vishakha undergoes both physical and psychological exploitation in her in-laws' house. Her husband and her father-in-law are learned persons. But the family is a typical Indian one ruled by male folk. Despite her strong will power, reason and intelligence, she has to follow the prescribed norms. Paravasu neglects her feelings, emotions and desires, and uses her body only to satiate his physical pleasure. He is a very ambitious and selfish person who leaves home for seven year signoring the role of husband when he is appointed as the Chief Priest by the king for the fire sacrifice to be conducted at the king's palace. The kingdom has been suffering from draught for ten years. So the king proposes to conduct fire sacrifice (Yajna) to propitiate Lord Indra, god of rain. Vishakha is left at the mercy of Raibhya, her father-in-law Arvasu and her lover. She becomes a victim of the perpetual exploitation and torture of her father-in-law who beats her, drags her by holding her hair and uses obscene and derogative words for her. He calls her "a roving whore" and "a buffalo that's been rolling in mud" (20). Instead of protecting his daughter-in-law in the absence of Paravasu, he subjects her to his sexual lust, too. He keeps vigil on her all activities. All these lead her to alienation.

Yavakri returns from forest after ten year penance, acquiring knowledge of the Vedas. Being pleased with the penance, Lord Indra blesses him with knowledge of the Vedas. This makes him proud and vain. There is a little change in his thought and attitude despite his achievement of knowledge and enlightenment. He still burns in the fire of pride, jealousy and revenge. In her craving for love and hunger for words and sympathy, Vishakha surrenders herself to Yavakri who coaxes her for sexual relation and he succeeds. Thus he exploits her physically and emotionally.

Yavakri takes revenge on Raibhya's family by seducing Paravasu's wife because his father has been neglected. He is hypocrite, arrogant and proud. He is offended that his father, though equally learned sage yet not given proper importance in the society, and Raibhya gets prominence over his father. He is enraged that Paravasu is made the Chief Priest of the fire sacrifice and not his father. So he cherishes an evil purpose to destroy the happiness and reputation of Raibhya and Paravasu. He discloses his vile intention before Vishakha, "What matters is that I hate your husband's family. My father deserved to be invited as Chief Priest the sacrifice. But that too went to Paravasu, your husband" (22). Iros Vaja aptly comments, "Yavakri's sole purpose is to destroy the happiness and reputation of Raibhya and his son Paravasu" (30). The dramatist depicts how woman is used as a weapon by man for taking revenge on others from ancient times to the present age. In the very beginning she is deprived of the right to

choose her life partner and is forced to marry other person. Later, she is left alone to her fate for seven years to be exploited by men.

Karnad presents the other side of Vishakha's character too. She no longer remains a dumb and completely chained. She is aware of the duty of a wife as well as of a husband. If a husband fails to perform his duty to take care of the feelings, emotions and desires of his wife he loses authority over her. When Yavakri arrives, she willingly surrenders her body to him because her husband has left her alone uncared for seven years. She knows her rights and is capable of taking her own decisions. Thus she teaches a lesson to Paravasu by being infidel to him. She even boldly confesses her extra-marital relationship with Yavakri before her father-in-law and her husband. Through her act of relationship outside marriage, she challenges patriarchal regulations, and by offering her body to Yavakri she asserts her sexuality. When she realises that Yavakri had evil intention in making physical relation with her, she becomes angry. She reacts, "Enough, Yavakri. Don't say anything more. I don't want to know. It's my fault. I shouldn't have yielded to you..." (23) When she gets an opportunity to avenge her insult, she takes revenge by draining out the magic water from the kamandalu (water pot) and Yavakri is killed by the demon. It is the magic water alone that could save Yavakri from death. By depriving Yavakri, the source of pride and over confidence, she takes revenge of the humiliation that he inflicted on her. Yavakri meets his death because he has humiliated a woman. Thus these acts of Vishakha can be viewed as the subversion of the patriarchal structures. Despite her ceaseless suffering, she struggles to assert her freedom and her rights as a human being.

Nittilai is another important woman character in this play. She is a beautiful girl of hunter tribe community. Though illiterate, she is intelligent, and possesses foresightedness and greater values like love and compassion for humanity. She is a philanthropist. Gulshan Das and T. Arora Khan call her "an ideal icon of humanity" (198). Though she follows the traditions of her community, she also revolts against the principles of patriarchal society. She falls in love with Arvasu, the younger brother of Paravasu, a boy from Brahmin caste. Her love is ideal and pure, and reciprocal. But her parents cannot marry her off to Arvasu unless they get approval of the elders of her community. On the other hand, Arvasu is ready to sacrifice his status of the high class Brahmin society. He tells Nittilai, "Mother of Mine! I am about to jettison my caste, my people, my whole past for you. Can't you forget a minor custom for my sake?" (44). Their marriage can be solemnised only after the approval of the elderly people of her community because upper caste men are unbelievable. Nittilai tells Arvasu that her father always says, "These high caste men are glad enough to bed our women but not to wed them" (8). Through this line Karnad underlines the behaviour and attitudes of the high caste men towards the low caste women. Nittilai presents the hypocrisy of the upper caste men who use lower caste women for sexual gratification but do not like to marry them. She also reveals how they exploit low caste women. Through the episode of Nittilai, Karnad also points out that inter-caste marriage, especially upper casteboy and lower caste girl is not tolerated in Indian society.

Despite her genuine love for Arvasu, Nittilai is married off to a boy of her own tribe by her parents. As per the decision of the tribal community, Arvasu is supposed to appear before her father and elders of the village, and take their approval for marriage. But he fails to reach the villagers at the appointed time because of his cousin Yavakri's death. When Raibhya learns about the incest done by Yavakri from the mouth of Vishakha herself, he becomes angry and invokes demon Brahm Rakshasa and spirit like Vishakha to kill Yavakri. Yavakri is killed by the demon at the time of mid-day meal. As Yavakri is his cousin, Arvasu has to cremate him and accomplish funeral rites. He consoles his uncle who has lost his young son. However, his uncle dies of grief. Arvasu reaches Nittilai's village but it becomes too late. His failure in keeping up the scheduled time hurts Nittilai's father. Her father reacts, "This daughter of mine has made me a laughing stock in the eyes of the world, and I'm willing to marry her off to anyone who'll take her" (27). Despite their reciprocal and genuine love, they fail to achieve marital bliss. Thus Nittialai's dream remains unrealised and she leads a traditional woman's life in patriarchy.

A crucial situation comes in her marital life. Arvasu, her former lover, is in trouble as he has been brutally beaten by the king's soldiers. Defying the social restrictions, she runs away from her husband and father to help and rescue Arvasu from crises. Her intention is pure. She knows the customs of her hunter community that this act of deserting her husband can bring threat to her life. Her husband and brother take it as a blot of their traditions and her husband kills her. They are not ready to listen to and understand her grievance or position. Nittilai has to die because her society does not permit a woman to have relation with another man beyond marriage. Through this incident the dramatist expresses his worries about the honour killing of women usually seen in Indian society. Nittilai has a great heart and judicious mind. During her stay with Arvasu for nursing, she suggests Arvasu to marry another girl from his own caste whom he likes and she will remain like his sister. Thus she does not want to bring further disgrace to her husband and community. The playwright highlights how the patriarchal hegemony prevails in the tribal community also.

Women characters Vishakha and Nittilai are victims of patriarchal hegemony. They represent two different social communities and both are subjected to violent displacement and silencing. Even Vishakha's social status as a Brahmin woman does not privilege her. She is subjected to utmost suffering and even Nittilai loses her life at the end of the play. But they are no longer silent sufferers. They act with their own freedom, and challenge patriarchal dominance. They have the strength to break the bondage of patriarchy and move forward towards achieving liberty, identity and individuality. Nittilai feels spiritually empowered due to her pure love for Arvasu and defies narrow boundaries of her community. She even tries to outgrow her emotional attachment for her lover and dedicates her service. Desertion of her community reveals her commitment for her first love. Karnad presents her as a self-respecting woman. He thus presents the change that is evident in the psyche of woman. Moreover, the identity of two female characters is also problematic and illustrative of anonymity they suffer as individuals.

Through the episode of Arvasu and Nittilai, Karnad castigates the caste system of India, which provides privilege to Brahmins and other so called upper castes, and treats the tribal community as inferior. The dramatist mocks the hypocrisy, treachery, jealousy, adultery, betrayal, power politics, revenge and malice of the Brahmins. Brahmin characters of the mythology Raibhya, Yavakri and Paravasu burn in the fire of these evils. Only Arvasu is exceptional. Karnad ridicules the knowledge of these people which does not help them in overcoming these malicious weaknesses. Thus he satirises the vanity of the priestly class and the hollowness of their knowledge. M.K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan aptly remark with regard to this play, "Karnad gives a contemporary meaning to an old legend which stresses the dangers of knowledge without wisdom, and power without integrity" (204).

The playwright portrays Arvasu as a crusader against caste system, who is determined to demolish this rigid system. His boldness is revealed in his love for Nittilai, a girl considered below his community and his determination for marriage. He defies the norms of his Brahmin society and joins the troupe of stage players. He declares, "All I want is to dance, and sing and act" (7). The caste norm does not allow a Brahmin to act on a stage show. His elder brother Paravasu warns Arvasu, "If you value your brahminhood, don't act on stage" (30). This profession is reserved for the people belonging to low castes. Arvasu even acts as Vritra, a demon in the play staged at the fire sacrifice conducted at the palace. According to Nand Kumar, "Through dramatization of the mythological episode of Arvasu's love for a tribal girl of hunting community, Karnad very significantly condemns and ridicules the caste system which has been social stigma for ages" (176). Through the episode of Nittilai Karnad presents the pathetic condition of contemporary society where the so called upper caste people use the tool of man-made caste hierarchy for achieving superiority and power, and exploit the under privileged lower caste men and women without any practical reason. Thus the playwright advocates the demolition of this rigid caste system of India.

Karnad depicts the erosion of morality in Indian society, especially in the upper class people. Arvasu, despite his selfless love and devotion towards his elder brother, is deceived, betrayed and victimised by him. Paravasu comes home one month before completing the fire sacrifice. He is infuriated at his father because Raibhya has killed Yavakri which has disturbed the fire sacrifice and he has molested his wife. He poses before Arvasu that he has killed his father mistakenly. He asks Arvasu to cremate the dead father and accomplish the penitential rites. He gives impression that the fire sacrifice will be adversely affected if he stays at home, and Arvasu is not capable of performing the fire sacrifice alone. So his presence at the fire sacrifice is essential. Arvasu accepts his brother's suggestion and takes the responsibility of the crime on his own shoulders. After completing the rituals, Arvasu visits the fire sacrifice and insists to enter the sacrificial enclosure, but he is not allowed. Instead, he is afflicted with the crime of patricide and Brahminicide by his brother. Parayasu gives the false message to the king that he is Brahmin killer and requests the king not to allow Arvasu to attend the fire sacrifice. Ultimately, the king orders his soldiers to throw him out. The king's soldiers beat him nearly to death. Arvasu is saved by the actor manager and nursed by Nittilai. Raibhya, a learned man, indulges in incest with his own daughter-in-law. Yavakri too suffers from moral laxity.

The dramatist reveals that Arvasu wishes to take revenge on his brother when he recovers his health after nursing and healing care of Nittilai. But it is Nittilai who dissuades him from taking the evil act of revenge which will only bring more suffering and disaster. She points out that Arvasu's family has experienced bloodshed due to the evil of revenge. Yavakri, his cousin, avenges his father's shame by seducing his sisterin-law, his father avenges her by killing Yavakri, and Paravasu kills his father. The noble and judicious Arvasu accepts her suggestion. He decides to prove his worth by participating as an actor in the play which is to be staged at the site of the fire sacrifice, and that play will be witnessed by the king, Paravasu, people involved in the fire sacrifice, and the villagers. The actor manager of the troupe of actors requests the king to allow them to perform a play to entertain gods, and argues that fire sacrifice is not enough to appease gods. The theme of the play is the killing of Vritra, the water hoarding serpent by god Indra. The king and Paravasu approve their plea. Paravasu also permits Arvasu to play the role of Vritra, a demon in this play. In the course of the play, Arvasu, in frenzy, chases Lord Indra. A chaotic situation arises and Nittilai appears from the audience. She is seen by her husband and her brother who chase her and she is slayed by her husband. Grieved Arvasu lifts Nittilai in his arms and enters into the burning fire but the fire dies. Lord Indra appears before him, and promises one boon that Arvasu could ask. Arvasu wishes to ask to return the life of Nittilai but Lord Indra tells him that the wheel of time should not be rolled back otherwise all those who have died may return to life. Arvasu understands the significance of the mysteries shared by Indra. Brahm Rakshasa appears and tells Arvasu that he has obeyed his father's order and killed Yavakri. Thus he has done his duty. But he is living in torment. He prays Arvasu for his liberation from the state in which he can neither live normally nor die peacefully. Arvasu listens to his plea and requests Indra to redeem Brahm Rakshasa. Lord Indra accepts Arvasu's request and redeems the demon. Thus Arvasu gives priority to human love over his personal love. He exhibits his mercy for the demon. Then it starts raining in abundance and the drought ends. The play ends with redemptive act of Arvasu. Thus the dramatist portrays him as a humanist who sacrifices his own interest for the sake of humanity. Karnad makes alterations in the ending of the original story of the Mahabharata. In the original story, on the request of Arvasu Raibhya, Bhardwaja, Yavakri and Paravasu are brought back to life, and Paravasu is reprimanded for his heinous act.

Similarly, Nittilai outwits the learned Brahmin male characters - Raibhya, Paravasu and Yavakri who boast of their erudition but such knowledge has no use for human beings. She questions the utility of such knowledge. She asks, "Why didn't Yavakri ask for a couple of good showers?" (10) She also puts a serious question, "What is the point of any knowledge, if you can't save dying children and if you can't predict the moment of death" (11). Yavakri could have prayed Indra for rain to end the drought of the kingdom. But he didn't care for it. Instead, he is deeply in the grip of negative values such as revenge, pride and lust. Contrary to this, it is the sacrifice of less

learned Arvasu and illiterate Nittilai which brings rains for the parched land and happiness to the common people. Though illiterate and savage, Nittilai possesses foresightedness and envisions the disastrous results of jealousy, pride, revenge, treachery, etc. She is the epitome of sacrifice, love, and compassion.

Thus The Fire and The Rain is a postcolonial treatise which highlights social, familial and psychological problems. It raises the voice for women who are being oppressed in the patriarchal society. It reflects the subjugation of women. As Helen Cixous states, "And we perceive that 'victory' always amounts to the same thing: it is the hierarchized. The hierarchazation subjects the entire conceptual organization to man. A male privilege, which can be seen in the opposition by which it sustains itself between activity and passivity" (288). But they have started to resist the orthodox conventions and assert for their rights and individuality. Karnad focuses on the shrewd nature of modern man and patriarchy that are responsible for exploitation of women. He projects that women are oppressed in culturally patriarchal Indian society despite it is a democratic country. He also attacks the illogical caste system which privileges upper caste people and deprives the lower caste people of the due share of respect in the society. Similarly, he focuses how the people of marginalized community like the tribal community are looked down upon by upper caste people. He uses myths to address the problems which have shackled Indian society. Gauri Shankar Jha aptly observes about the playwright, "On the Indian English Drama scenario, Girish Karanad is the only playwright with substantial postcolonial reverberations" (68).

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The Voice of the Voiceless as a Protest in Godaan by Premchand

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Abstract

Premchand has been popularly hailed as the 'Upanyas Samrat' (Emperor among Novelists). He has been very successful in giving voice to the voiceless, downtrodden and deprived section of the society. This voice enables the characters to protest against exploitation, deprivation, economic inequality, injustice, tortures, money-lending, caste system, social evils, patriarchy, tyranny of zamindars, etc. This paper tries to explore the various sites of struggle, protests and conflict throughout *Godaan* (1936). It is a classic and considered to be an epic novel on the life of landless and poor peasants. It dramatizes the tragedy of Hori, a poor and submissive peasant, and the entire proletariat class. The paper also examines how callous and conventional codes of community ruin the life of the superstitious and poor proletariat class of people. This paper also tries to analyse the conflict between old and younger generation since there is generational gap between them.

Keywords: Voice, caste system, exploitation, injustice, protest, society, tradition

Premchand is a progressive writer committed to the social cause. He is successful in giving voice to the voiceless in *Godaan*. He has flawlessly depicted the social systems of Indian society which are hostile to the people of the peasant class. "He believed that every writer could and should play significant role in changing and remodelling the emotions, values and the ways of life of his people" (Rais 190). Gone are the days when people used to tolerate tortures and bear insults and invectives of the so-called upper class people but now the deprived and the downtrodden have started protesting

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against injustice, exploitation, discrimination and economic deprivation, and asserting their rights.

Premachnd, in his novels, has created two major types of characters- Traditional/conventional (submissive characters) and modern (unyielding characters). The traditional/conventional characters are conformists and tolerant to their tortures, exploitations and injustice. But the modern characters are unyielding in nature and non-conform is't towards injustice. The representatives of conventional characters are Hori (protagonist of the novel), Bhola, Raisaheb, Khanna, Dataddin, etc. and the characters like Gobar, Dhaniya, Jhuniya, Siliya, Malti, Mehta, Matadin stand for the voice of modern India.

Gobar and Dhaniya, Silia and Matadin have their own voice of protest and they rebel against callous codes of community and rotten system of society. Silia and Matadin raise voice against inhuman practices by making inter-caste alliance and establishing physical relationship before marriage. Such cases are now very common in so-called cultured and civilized society.

The following conversation between Hori and Gobar(father and son) denotes Hori's fatalistic attitude and it depicts that he has internalized his sorrow and suffering, exploitation and deprivation inflicted upon his families by the exploitative upper class people. But he is a character of the modern generation who openly challenges and protests against unjust and in human power structure.

Hori: You expect our life to be like theirs?

Gobar: Well, God created us equal?

Hori: God creates men great or small.

Gobar: Those are just excuses. God creates all people equal. But when someone gets hold of a little power, he eats down the poor and becomes rich.

Hori: Even now the master spends four a day singing rhymes.

Gobar: But whose labour supports that hymns-signing and charity-giving.

(The Gift of a Cow 31)

This is one of the hottest discussions in the novel on the burning issues of its time and shows Gobar's intolerant attitude towards various kinds of exploitation. This is the difference between their perception and conception of the issues pertaining to the society which are the cause of conflict. Gobar is a man with modern outlook and Hori represents the voice of tradition and custom. So, it is a conflict between tradition and modernity. The modern man wants equality through the voice of protest where as traditional man thinks that equality is not possible.

The voice of protest causes conflict between Gobar and his mother, Jhuniya and her father Bhola, Siliya and her parents, Matadin and his father Datadin, Mathura and his father Gauri Ram. Gobar and Jhuniadefy the social norms and moral codes of community by making inter-caste alliance and even becoming physically intimate and making Jhuniya pregnant before their marriage. This defiant act brings disgrace to

their families and due to this act Hori's family is excommunicated by the community. Bhola and his son Kamta are thirsty of Jhuniya's blood. They want to kill her because she has brought disgrace to her family and broke the barriers and bondages. Silia, a low caste girl is impregnated by Matadin but he is unable to accept and accommodate her because of her low caste which creates chaos and commotion in Siliya's community. This protest against caste system is so acute that members of community pollute and defile him by putting bones in his mouth. The same protest against caste system causes many serious problems in the contemporary Indian society. Mathura opposes his father's greed for dowry from Hori but he believes in marriage without dowry. This creates anger and conflict in Gauri's mind and he beats his son very badly but finally the son is victorious. These kinds of protests against traditionally orchestrated systems present the conflict between tradition and modernity.

Gobar protests against his mother's attitude too on several issues. He believes that the world is self-centred and selfish, and even parents seem to be uncaring and selfish at times. This view hurts Dhaniya's sentiments and feelings deeply but she thinks that parents cannot be cruel and callous towards their children but normally it is tendency of the children who disrespect and ignore their parents when they get married and start earning money. This is the harsh reality of contemporary Indian society where old and ailing parents are ignored deliberately in both urban and rural areas. When Gobar was living in the city, he picked up some bad habits. But when he returns home after few months, he starts defying and disobeying his parents. This is the negative consequences of urban life where people are self-centred. They think only about their wife and children. Gobar even does not touch the feet of his mother when he leaves for the city angrily that wounds her heart and makes her heart bleeds: "Dhaniya was stunned...the fond dreams of a life time seemed shattered. Gobar's words were like burning sand on her heart and hopes, like grams, were scorched by the touch" (*The Gift of a Cow* 277).

The modern generation is independent, open-minded, defiant and rebellious against unjust practices which corrode Indian society. The representatives of the new generation do not believe in caste-bound, class-bound and capital-bound society. They want to abolish them through various types of rebellions. The modern men do not like any kind of social slavery, moral shackles and cultural fetters. They demand individual freedom where as men of traditional views want to preserve and maintain Orthodox and conventional set-up, customs and cultures, moral and manners, values and principles.

The death of a long-cherished cow poisoned by Hori's brother Hira causes Dhaniya's protest against the submissive attitude of her husband. She is bent upon sending Hira to the prison for his crime but Hori is ready to sacrifice anything in order to protect his brother from a heinous crime and sin. Dhaniya raised voice against injustice done to her by her husband and brother-in-law, and finally it turns into quarrel and conflict between husband and wife: "Hori was beating Dhaniya. Dhaniya was cursing him" (134). Dhaniya is so dominating that she forces her husband to put his hand on his son's head and swear. This is the most turbulent time for Hori to swear

because he has seen his brother near the cow. He is in deep dilemma and like Hamlet he is also in "to be or not to be" situation (Shakespeare, Act 3, Scene I, p. 284). The novelist depicts wife's conflict and protest against her husband in such a way that it becomes the stark reality of rural India. However, Hori places a trembling hand on Gobar's head and says in quivering voice, "I swear on my son's life that I did not see Hira near the cow's trough" (134). Hori tells a lie to save his brother from punishment and prison and for this he is ready to sacrifice his son. By saving Hira from such disgrace, he is able to save his family honour in some sense. Like his mother Gobar also protests this "false oath" (135).

Although Hori's whole family is starving yet he is taking debt to bribe the police for the sake of family honour. This makes Dhaniya very furious and she narrated her hand to mouth situation: "Here we are starving at home, longing for just a grain of food, with nothing to wear, and you go around tossing out handful of money just to save your honour" (140). This was the pathetic plight of farmer's family before independence and the situation is almost the same even after seventy five years of independence of India. Hori values family honour above everything in his life and he is a god-fearing farmer who is more worried about his family's honour and afraid of society rather than about his family members.

Hori is a fatalistic farmer and his conventional thinking is highlighted when he feels "the village council is the voice of God" (158) and is ready to pay the penalty through mortgaging his house and giving his whole grain without taking care of his family members. Dhaniya protests against her husband's conformist and conservative attitude. Hori is a man who can live without his family but not without his callous community. He is Aristotle's 'social animal' who cannot think of his existence without society. He is like a tree which is rooted in the soil of caste and community from where he derives strength. The patriarchal system of Indian society allows Hori to subdue the voice which tries to destabilize the social harmony and hierarchy.

The conflict between husband and wife is age-old and it is also between Bhola and Nohri, Khanna and Govindi. They all confront with each other on several issues. In this patriarchal society, husband has upper hand over his wife and the later has to bear the beatings, abuses, insults and invectives, and tolerate all kinds of tortures inflicted upon her by her husband. Dhaniya is bold and brave enough to challenge traditionally orchestrated patriarchal practices but finally she succumbs to societal norms and beliefs due to some unavoidable circumstances. When Bhola comes to take Hori'soxen in order to take revenge on Hori because the latter has accepted and accommodated Bhola's daughter as his daughter-in-law, Bhola tells Hori that if he wants to save his oxen and reputation then he has to throw Jhuniya out of his house. Oxen are the prestige of the peasants and also the means of agricultural activities. However, Hori has to lose both prestige and oxen in order to shelter Jhuniya. Agricultural activities are not possible without oxen and it would create a plethora of problems for Hori and his family. Thus, inter-caste alliance ruins the entire family.

Hori and Dhaniya struggle with the community. The community imposed a heavy penalty because they accept and accommodate Jhuniya in their house. Hori is compelled to mortgage "his house to Chingari Singh for eighty rupees" (160) but Dhaniya rebels against the cruel codes of community and challenges "the council of five". Hori surrenders himself before the council of five and pays the exorbitant penalty despite starvation in the family: "They somehow struggled through May, but by the beginning of June not a grain was left in the house. Even if two meals a day were not possible, there had to be at least one. If stomachs could not be filled, they must at least be half filled" (185). This is the cruelty of conventional social systems and practices where the powerful people suck the blood of the poor and the downtrodden. Hori is caught in such a situation where nobody gives him debt to buy the grain to save his family from starvation. Thus Premchand exposes the inhuman systems of the so-called civilized and cultured society. "Similar ruin attends peasant protagonist in Seva Ser Gehu, Khun Safed, Balidaan, Pus ki Rat, and Kafan showing the irreversible lapse from a perilous point of hope into resgnation, despair and even cynicism" (Pandey 165).

Hori is unable to cultivate his fields because he does not have Bullocks. The sowing season has started and there is no alternative before Hari. He is deeply dejected and disappointed with this pathetic condition. In this complex and critical situation, he is caught in the conspiracy of Datadin to get seed for sowing and he would take half share. Hori is forced to be ready for this deal. The crop is good, therefore, his family expects some money from it. Jhinguri Singh, the money lender took the cash and deducted what Hori owed to him. Out of hundred and twenty rupees, he gets twenty rupees which is also taken by Nokheram and Hori returns home empty - handed. The novelist depicts this condition in this way, "Dhaniya was on fire from head to foot" (229), when she saw him. Hori is the victim of the callous and unjustified systems such as money-lending and Zamindari system that destroy the very fabric of the society.

On the issue of debt, Gobar tries to make his father understand the exploitation behind the money-lending system "Noone here is anyone's servant. We're all equals. Veryfunny- lending someone a hundred rupees and getting him to work off the interest for the rest of his life while the principal stays exactly the same! That's not moneylending— it's bloodsucking" (269). This is how unjustified malpractices of money-lending exploit and deprive the poor peasants from basic needs in the society.

Gobar also struggles hard to persuade his father to avoid paying unjust and undue interests imposed on him by the money-lenders. He tries to make his father understand the root of the problem and raise voice against such forces. But Hori is a God-fearing farmer and he is afraid of Dattadin's curse. Gobar is trying to free his father from the complex practice of debt but there is no end of it. His protest is evident when he says to his father, "I could never have tolerated that my earnings going to fill up everyone else's houses while my own family sat by muzzled and starving" (431).

Dhaniya from the very beginning protests against her husband's servile attitude towards zamindar and says, "Why bother with all this flattery for land that couldn't

even provide food for their stomachs?" (16) Hori very hard to save his dignity through saving his land at any cost. However, reality is that his love for land is unable to provide even two squares meal a day due to unjust practices and rotten systems in the society. Govind Narain Sharma is of the view that the "loss of f land is a fall from grace, the loss of his status as a free man and degradation into servitude and mean labour" (Sharma 132). Love for land is essence of Hori's life.

Godaan also depicts the protest of Rudra Pratap against his father Rai Saheb but it is in different dimension and direction. It dramatizes the deteriorating condition of zamindari system. Rai Saheb struggles to maintain the grace and dignity of his loyal lineage and zamindari system. He is tired of his "parasitic existence". Rudra Pratap opposes his father since he wants to get married with the girl of his choice and become free from the dominating and greedy nature of his father. Pandit Onkaranath, an editor of the newspaper, protests against social evils but struggles to run his printing press and so he is dependent on Rai Sahib. Malti also raises voice of protest against social evils in order to reform the society.

There is a harmful effect of urban life on Gobar, his family and his relationship. He picks up bad habits of gambling, drinking, quarrelling and beating his wife whenever she confronts him for all these bad habits. Jhuniya struggles in the town to get two squares meals a day. When Gobar is badly injured while he is protesting against the mill owner, Jhuniya decides to do some kind of work to maintain family and bring medicines for her husband. The mill workers also protest against the exploitation, lack of amenities, injustice and under wages given to them by the mill owner. Khanna's factory is burnt to ashes and he is ruined due to conflict between mill workers and mill owner. The workers are lathi-charged and they are injured seriously. Due to rising industrialization there is always chaos, conflict and commotion in urban areas. The mill owner tries to exploit the workers but they raise the voice of protest against this unjust system and place their demands forward. This is the protest of the proletariat who had been voiceless for a long time but when Premchand endows them with the voice, we witness the rebellion against all kinds of injustices. Such protests are very common in contemporary Indian society due to the awareness and awakening of the proletariat. Mukherjee states that "In Godaan Premchand created the character Khanna to illustrate how money can dehumanize a man. Kafan shows the other side of the coin: here not money but its absence dehumanizes" (Mukherjee 146).

Though Dhaniya belongs to the old generation yet she raises voice against anything and everything which she thinks is unjust. She has courage enough to protest against her husband, her son, callous community, rotten systems, inhuman practices such as zamindari system, money lending which are antagonistic to the poor peasant class. She is one of the most courageous characters in the fictional works of Premchand. Gobar has imbibed and inculcated the same spirit of his mother. Like his mother, he also opposes unjustified practices and static systems and openly defies social, moral and cultural norms of the society. The agents of Rai Sahib and money-lenders see threat to their corrupt practices when Gobar threatens and warns them to stop wrongful

ways of earning money. "A young character of 'Premasram' Balrajrebels against the tyranny of the landlord and he is arrested and prosecuted' (Rais 192).

Finally, Dhaniya succumbs and stoops to the age-old and tyrannical norms of the society because she is partly compelled by the circumstances and partly by the community. For her "happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain" (Hardy 327). But Gobar is unending and unyielding whatever may be the situation and he is the architect of his own destiny which is indicative of Premchand's stature as a social realist and humanist. K. D. Kurtkoti remarks that.

Right from the beginning of the novel he is prone to change. He reacts instinctively against the injustice of Rai Sahib and questions his authority. He loves his father but at the same time does not approve of his actions. Gobar represents the vital energy of the new generation impatient of lethargy and stagnation of the mode of life which is convention ridden (144).

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Cognitive Transformation: A Method of Change in the Works of Suniti Namjoshi

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Abstract

Twentieth century brought rapid changes and paradigm shifts in various spheres of human life by introducing modern literary and deconstructive theories. One of the significant spheres that need to be mentioned is in the liberation and emancipation of women in the world dominated by patriarchy. The present paper focuses on the approaches and methods used by women to establish an egalitarian society. The main focus is on the strategies used by Suniti Namjoshi, a shrouded Indo-Briton lesbian feminist, in her writings. Through her life and literary works she aspires to create alternative perspectives of the master narratives and conceptual and contextual worlds which will be more humane. Namjoshi has emphasized on capturing the children's attitude if we wish to see any transformation in the society. Thus, she inclines to fables, legends and myths. Cognition is an important domain of human personality. Cognitive domains can be affected by cultural practices and cultures are embedded in languages and literatures. If we are able to influence and change cognitive thinking and cognition then transformation can be brought in the outlooks and attitudes of people.

Keywords: Cognition, iconoclast, transgressor, visionary, fabulist, defamiliarization

Introduction

The deconstructive and postcolonial studies have made significant contribution and have given the impetus for the feminist movements within the context of contemporary debates on feminism. Feminists are looking for new ways and means to withstand the

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adverse forces which have for ages, choked, suppressed and made women subservient and given them an inferior position and status in society. When we look for new methodologies to support the disadvantaged, oppressed and marginalized in society, it is very apt to discuss and discern the new approaches followed by the writers who are voicing against the traditional, canonical, the dominant and conventional methodologies of the past. When we use the term methodology, it sounds like jargon. Method is nothing but a way of doing something in a careful and logical way. Every writer has some method when one propounds some theory or carries some sort of research investigation. I would like to throw some light on the methodology used by Suniti Namjoshi (Namjoshi) in all her oeuvre. She is a contemporary feminist, lesbian, diasporic and non-conformist versatile writer who in all her works has debunked, deconstructed and demystified the traditional, canonical and the dominant narratives through the means of reconstructing myths, fables, fairy tales and also through re-visioning the tales of the past.

All the above mentioned approaches or methods involve human cognition. Therefore, in analyzing the traditional, canonical, conventional narratives, there is a need to understand the underlying interior designs, patterns and contrivances. In literary creation or socio-cultural practices, creative thinking plays a significant role. Similarly cognition plays a pivotal role in deconstructive studies. Cognition refers to the faculty of knowing and understanding by means of thought and sensory experiences. The empiricists have emphasized on sensory experiences as the source of knowledge and propounded that the senses are the doorways of all knowledge.

Psychology and Schools of Thought

There are different schools of thoughts like Gestalt psychology, Behaviourism, Humanistic Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Structuralism, Functionalism and Cognitive Psychology. Many different approaches of learning like conditioning, trial and error, and information processing have been discussed under different psychological schools of thoughts. Rejecting the pure stimulus-response approach of the behaviourists, cognitive psychology draws much from the Gestaltists who focus upon insight and define it as "the sudden perception of relationships among elements of a problem situation" (Cherry).

Cognitive Psychology is the field of psychology dedicated to examining how people think. Cognitive Psychology studies mental processes, including how people think, perceive, remember and learn. It began to emerge during the 1950s, partly as a response to behaviourism. Several researchers have made significant contributions to cognitive learning theory. Jerome Bruner (1915-2016), an American psychologist, focused on how mental processes are linked to teaching. He developed a learning theory based upon categorization. David Ausubel (1918-2008) also an American psychologist attempted to explain meaningful verbal learning as a phenomenon of consciousness rather than of behaviour. Rene Descartes, an American linguist and cognitive scientist sometimes called "father of modern linguistics", Noam Chomsky following Plato's approach to study of the mind and then using rational thought to create knowledge is

referred to as rationalism. Aristotle, John Lock and B. F. Skinner advocated people acquire their knowledge through observations of the world around them which is often referred to as empiricism. One of the most influential theories of this school of thought is the stages of cognitive development theory proposed and widely known perspectives about cognitive development is the cognitive stage theory by a Swiss psychologist named Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget proposed four major stages of cognitive development and called them (i) Sensorimotor Intelligence, (ii) Preparational Thinking, (iii) Concrete Operational Thinking, and (iv) Formal Operational Thinking. This approach is also known as the "staircase" model of development. Each stage of this model is correlated with an age period of childhood, but only approximately. Piaget recognised that the environment plays a huge role and focused on changes that take place in the internal cognitive structure. In recent times, cognitive learning theory is dominant in psychology. This is divided into two: Social Cognitive Theory and Cognitive Behavioural Theory. One of the major components of Social Cognitive Theory is observational learning. This theory helps us understand how people are influenced and their influence on the environment. Cognitive Behavioural Theory refers to our mental processes, such as our thoughts and interpretations of life events. It explains how the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of a person interact with each other. Thought leads to particular emotions which in turn lead to specific behavioural responses. Cognitive theory puts emphasis on how one thinks largely determines how one feels and behaves. This relates to and incorporates all forms of knowing, including memory, psycholinguistics, thinking, comprehension, motivation and perception (Cherry).

Definition of cognition

Cognition is simply defined as our thinking and discerning process. It describes the very act of acquiring knowledge through perception, thinking, imagination, and remembering, judging, problem-solving, and selective attention. Cognition is one of the higher functions that our brain performs. In recent years, the study of cognition has become a sub-discipline of psychology known as cognitive psychology. The Oxford Lexico defines cognition as "The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses." One of the earliest definitions of cognitive was presented in the first textbook on cognitive psychology published in 1967. According to Neisser, cognition "involves all processes, by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used" (4). Robert J. Sternberg (1999) defined cognitive psychology as that which deals with how people perceive, learn, remember and think about information. In 2005, Robert L. Solso gave another definition of cognitive psychology as the study of processes underlying mental events. Thinking is one of the major components of cognition. Cognition is described by Licht, Hull and Ballantyne (2014) as the "mental activity associated with obtaining, converting and using knowledge" (Dumper).

Social cognitive theory, used in psychology, education, and communication, holds that portions of an individual's knowledge acquisition can be directly related to observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences, and outside media influences.

Cognitive Theory

The study of cognitive theory is the study of the information processing of the mind. All processes of thought fall within the realm of cognition. These processes operate by manipulating information that comes into the mind. When the mind receives new information, it does two things: codes it as 'new' information or retrieves it from memory as 'not new' information. For this reason, cognition also means knowing. There are three basic steps to the cognition or thinking process: perception, selective attention, and memory.

Three Aspects of Cognition

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli. Stimuli refers to a thing or event that evokes a response. Think of perception as the way you view things or how we interpret what we see. For an example, suppose there is an eight ounce glass filled with four ounces of water. One person will perceive a glass half full and another will perceive a glass half empty.

Attention refers to how we actively process specific information present in our environment. Think of attention as a highlighter. As you read through a section of text in a book, the highlighted section stands out, causing you to focus your interest on that area. Attention allows you to tune out information, sensations, and perceptions that are not relevant at the moment and instead focus your energy on the information that is important.

Memory involves the process of acquiring, storing and recalling information. It plays a vital part in our life.

Cognitive theory is a major cluster of theories in social psychology, which focus upon the links between mental processes (such as perception, memory, attitudes, or decision-making), and social behaviour. At a general level such theories are opposed to behaviourism, and suggest that human beings are active in selecting stimuli, constructing meanings, and making sense of their worlds. There are many branches of cognitive theory, including Fritz Heider's cognitive balance theory, Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory, George Kelly's personal construct theory, and attribution theory (see J. R. Eiser, "Cognitive Social Psychology" 1980).

Bloom's Taxonomy was created in 1956 under the leadership of educational psychologist Dr. Benjamin Bloom in order to promote higher forms of thinking in education, such as analyzing and evaluating concepts, processes, procedures, and principles, rather than just remembering facts (rote learning). It is most often used when designing educational, training, and learning processes.

The Three Domains of Learning

The committee headed by Bloom on Taxonomy of Learning identified three domains of educational activities or learning (Bloom, et al. 1956):

(i) Cognitive Domain: mental skills (knowledge)

- (ii) Affective Domain: growth in feelings or emotional areas (attitude or self) and,
- (iii) Psychomotor Domain: manual or physical skills (skills)

Since the work was produced by higher education, the words tend to be a little bigger than we normally use. Domains may be thought of as categories. Instructional designers, trainers, and educators often refer to these three categories as KSA (Knowledge [cognitive], Skills [psychomotor], and Attitudes [affective]). This taxonomy of learning behaviors may be thought of as "the goals of the learning process." That is, after a learning episode, the learner should have acquired a new skill, knowledge, and attitude.

Cognitive Domain

The cognitive domain involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills (Bloom 1956). This includes the recall or recognition of specific facts, procedural patterns, and concepts that serve in the development of intellectual abilities and skills. There are six major categories of cognitive processes, starting from the simplest to the most complex (see the Table 1 and 2 below for an in-depth coverage of each category):

Table 1

Knowledge Comprehension
Application
Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

The categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties. That is, the first ones must normally be mastered before the next one can take place.

Table 2

ORIGINAL DOMAIN	NEW DOMAIN
Evaluation	Creating
Synthesis	Evaluating
Analysis	Analyzing
Application	Applying
Comprehension	Understanding
Knowledge	Remembering

Feminists have observed that the traditional collective cognition is biased and patriarchy oriented and down the ages the patriarchy has subordinated women as a class (the second sex, that is the other of men also inferior to men) in all spheres of human lives. When it comes to Namioshi as a feminist writer, she silently revolts through her life and methodologies used in all her writings. There is a significant critical and analytical work published by C. Vijayasree, Suniti Namjoshi: The Artful Transgressor (2001), where she has critically and analytically studied the methods used by S. Namjoshi. Vijayasree locates the works of Namjoshi within the context of contemporary debates on feminism, postcolonialism and diasporic writings. Namjoshi's works are considered in relation to narrative techniques, formal experimentation, revisionist myth-making, diasporic experiences and sexual politics. Using insights from the feminist and postcolonial theories, Vijayasree explores the diverse cultural influences that inform Namioshi's writing with its complex blend of eastern and western ideas, myths and modes of perception. Fables and fabulation also form an important part of Namjoshi's works right from The Blue Donkey Fables, Feminist Fables to the present (Vijayasree 15). Vijayasree evaluates or sees Namjoshi as an "artful transgressor." Here one may ask the question: who is a transgressor? The meaning of the word "transgressor" is "one who goes beyond the limit of what is morally and legally accepted" (22). If it is so, we can say that Namjoshi's technique or method is immoral and illegal. The counter question may be posed by whose standard? The answer is by the canonical narratives or by the standard of the patriarchy.

In the era of postmodernism and postcolonialism, structures are radically being changed due to the existence of various liberating and emancipatory movements. For ages women have been subordinated and are victims of class, gender, sexual, ethnic, racial social inequalities and discriminations. They have been doubly imprisoned – firstly by the patriarchal system and secondly by the language. In any culture myths have come to embody patriarchal perspectives because all social and cultural institutions- religion, law, history and so on – have been largely under the control of men. Namjoshi's deconstructive approaches to examine, analyze and reconstruct the canonical narratives relate to cognition, conceptualization and problem solving, or creativity. Sumita Puri in her book *Indian Diaspora Writer: Suniti Namjoshi: A Voice of Radical Feminism* (2020) states:

Fairy and folk tales are aimed as the stepping stones for laying the foundation for the personality of the individual. They are the social and cultural signifiers embedded and embodied in the narratives to be conveyed to the children. Fairy tales, folktales and myths have been reconstructed, refined and reinterpreted several times to discover their concealed meanings (52).

Feminist critics have identified acts of "revision, deconstruction, appropriation and subversion" as central to much of feminist writing. The retelling of the myth articulates the silenced – the plight of women as objects of male gaze and erotic desire. The conventional fairy tale plots usually consist of youthful princes falling in love with poor maidens followed by their marriage as consummation of their love. Thus, the poor girls marry rich handsome princes and live happily and comfortably ever after.

The young girls are illustrated as a paragon of beauty, innocence, docility and femininity. To illustrate what happens next Sumita Puri quotes, "Elizabeth Green gives us a sequel to the tale in a different tone and a not so happy ending." Greens fairy tale, "Cindrella's Daughters" does not begin conventionally 'once upon a time'" (59).

Explaining how myths and fairy tales embody cultures and social orders, Sumita Puri refers to Gretchen Sankey's "Re-viewing the Life and Times of Little Red Riding Hood," where she has referred to Jack Zipes and writes:

Jack Zipes disputes that the writers of fairy tales "were men who were interested in preserving patriarchal norms, and therefore, Little Red Riding Hood's image must be seen as a male creation and projection," and that the widespread and friendly reception of the fairy tale owes to the general acceptance of the cultural notions of sexuality, sex roles and domination embedded in it (63).

Why Namjoshi chooses fables over other forms, she offers an "Explanation" in the form of a short poem from *The Blue Donkey Fables*:

Why do you write about plants and animals?

Why not people?

Because

no daffodil shrieks to be plucked,

no lily rages, admire my bower.

And dogs go about and shit

Their shit at least it mixes

With the stones and mud...Someone explains,

'A tree is not a person. A boy is not a cat.'

'Yes', I reply, striving for patience,

'that is the problem. Precisely that' (6).

As a consequence, for Namjoshi the strictly human activity of 'making stories' is where agency lies: "every re-telling of a myth is a re-working of it. Every hearing or reading of a myth is a re-creation of it. It is only when we engage with a myth that it resonates, that it becomes charged and re-charged with meaning" (*BB* xi). This writing and re-writing, reading and re-reading, is Babel, the endless and fragmentary flow of human culture: "Building Babel is what people do" (xvi).

Women are objectified, commoditized in patriarchal order. Namjoshi reveals these aspects of patriarchal autonomy and objectification of women as well in her fables like "The Milk-White Mare", "Legend," and "The Dower" in *Feminist Fables* (27). Vijayasree finds a new approach in the works of Suniti Namjoshi and calls it "transgression". All these diverse methodologies invented and used by feminists in their critical studies of the patriarchal, canonical and traditional texts to usher in transformation, both in her life and art, she is a nonconformist; she transgresses

norms of societal and literary conventions; stresses the need for looking at things and life from alternative perspectives so that conventional hierarchies of class, race, sex and gender get demolished and more acceptable and egalitarian perspectives may emerge. Namjoshi represents the tensions of inhabiting and writing from margins and in-between spaces as woman, as a lesbian and a diasporic writer sophisticates the art of tapping the plural possibilities afforded by her positioning in a fluid state. To examine the existing systems of thought, to interrogate the texts and contents of male authority and offer alternate moods of cognition and perception – these are among the prime concerns of Namjosi's creative work. Her revisionist writing may best be viewed as a part of contemporary women writers' rejection of traditional narratives (Vijayasree 15).

Rachel Blau DuPlesis, in "Writing Beyond the Ending", sees this revisionary critique as a major thread in the work of twentieth century women writers (qtd. in Vijayasree 22). Vijayasree writes in *Suniti Namjoshi: The Artful Transgressor*,

transgression is the key to transformation here, and appropriation turns into expropriation. Much of Namjoshi's work is marked by artful transgressions of standard narrative in thematic, technical and narratorial terms. Such transgressions necessitate an ironic vision, an ability to imagine beyond the limits of the so called "notional" and "standard", and an intent for transformational change (22-23).

Feminist writers must refuse to be bound by conventional roles, have a restless striving after reality, a quest for alternate modes of perception and expression in their works and endeavours. In this quest fantasy works as a technique of defamiliarization. Here we can refer to Rosemary Jackson's statement that illustrates the process: "The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent" (qtd. in Vijayasree 26).

For some critics such as Helene Cixous, language is tied intimately to gender, "I write woman must write woman. And man, man" (Cixous 15). Therefore a quest for new words becomes an important aspect of women's movement for liberation. Namjoshi's work - poetical as well as fictional - despite its overtly political designs is more than literature of protest. It is provocative, engaging and entertaining. Fantasies, excursions into strange places, free traffic between animal and human worlds, outrageous inversions of all accepted notions of order are delightfully inventive and hallmark of a process of new creation and transformation. Vijayasree writes:

With both defensive and offensive is acid, flamboyant comedy efficiently exposes the anomalies in contemporary social structures. Since Namjoshi's work insists on the relativity and mutability of truth and reality and defies fixity of meaning, it is ingenuous to attempt any definitive readings or interpretations of her texts. Thus, Namjoshi's work within the broad spectrum of women's writing and other oppositional discourses, contribute to the creation of alternate worlds, verbal, textual and conceptual, which once imagined become possible places to dwell in future. In retelling myths, women above

all re-construct and re-constitute the worlds contained in words and offer correctives to the male biased versions of words as well as worlds (28).

Retelling an old tale from a fresh perspective, reordering the world contained in it according to a woman's perceptions, rectifying the value systems projected in the past to ensure gender-justice, liberating women from the stereotypes of stories of the past – these are the objectives of revisionist myth-making. This is an overtly political project aimed at overturning the patriarchal domination of culture and language. One of the challenging tasks for feminist writers is to interrogate all traditional expectations of femininity in their writings. Subversion in Namjoshi's text is not mere substitution of woman in man's place but an imaginary rewriting of the text and reconstitution of the context. What Namjoshi achieves by setting these women free from the prison house of old tales is the liberation of the readers from the tyranny of stereotypical images.

Namjoshi has established herself as a lesbian, feminist, diasporic, revisionary, fabulist, and non-conformist in contemporary times. There is no doubt that she is a writer with a difference. Plato has opined myths as noble lies. Namjoshi has been greatly influenced by Virginia Woolf, Adrienne Rich, and Kate Millet. Feminist critics have identified acts of "revision, deconstruction, appropriation, and subversion" as central to much of feminist writings. Outrageous inversions of all accepted notions of order, belief in the theory of relativity contribute in re-reading and re-interpretation of the conventional narratives. The role–reversal, the plot-inversions, and subversions, fantasy and irony are her instruments.

Feminist Fables (1981) is a collection of ingenious tales which has become a minor feminist classic. In their timeless sweep through past, present, and even future worlds they rework ancient myths, legends and fairy tales from both East and West. From Scheherazade to Rapunzel, Medusa to Miss Muffet, they invent a mythology that simultaneously entertains and provokes. Feminist Fables is a crisp retelling of canonical and apocryphal folk tales – drawing on sources as varied as the Panchtantra, Ovid's Metamorphoses and European fairy tales – from distinctly queer perspectives. Fables question whenever there is an imbalance of power.

The Conversations of Cow (1985) is a dialogue between Suniti and a moody cow called Bhadravati. The novel is a mixture of satirical fiction, fantasy and fable, and examines the relationship between Suniti, a feminist lesbian, and Bhadravati, a Brahmin cow. The Mothers of Maya Diip (1989) is a scathing satire and a creation of a utopia. These are witty, poignant, and candid tales. The best one is as follows:

there was once a man, who thought he could do anything, even be a woman. So he acquired a baby, changed its diapers, and fed the damn thing three times a night. He did all the housework, was deferential to men, and got worn out. But he had a brother, Jack, a clever fellow, who hired a wife and got it done (Namjoshi, *FF* 34).

Namjoshi exposes the male-centric ideas and values instilled in humans since childhood through her revision and rewriting of the patriarchal order in the tales. The original fables favoured masculine qualities instead of delving into the most heinous one.

Conclusion

All the stories of Feminist Fables underscore a moral: there is a need to break all kinds of conditioning, above all cognitive conditioning in order to be able to apprehend the possibility of gender-justice. Each of the stories retold by her stirs the reader to probe the familiar tales and discover the underlying hegemonic designs. The alteration is brought and effected by changing the point of view, and viewing the experiences of these women from a female perspective. The role reversals, plot-inversions and subversions in Namjoshi's work produce humour that is at once pleasant, provocative and rebellious. Altering the original images, breaking parallels which have been established, frustrating stereotypical expectations of readers- all these are a part of the writer's playful engagement with conventional texts and concepts, and the reader who has by now grasped the rules of the game becomes the co-player perceiving new patterns of thought that emerge from the inversions and subversions of stereotypes. She is in quest of alternatives to the existing modes of being, and fantasy and irony are her instruments in negotiating possibilities. Namjoshi presses into service the subversive potential of these devices to play with patriarchal norms, hegemonic structures, familial and sexual codes as well as literary and generic conventions. Textual transgressions in her work are actually meant to urge the need for a cognitive and perceptual transformation. Her work as anti-colonial counter discourse is a significant experiment in postcolonial and feminist writings. Through a successful subversion of canonical texts/genres, Namjoshi rewrites the master narratives, erases the distinction between prose and verse, dethrones the textual authority and liberates the objects of the imperial/patriarchal discourse. Her work announces a textual revolt opposing and decentering the dominant discourse from within and achieves a major break through in feminist and postcolonial writings.

Glossary:

Visionary/Revisionist: Rejection of the dominant traditional master narratives and construction of new insights.

Non-Conformist: One who is not governed by any traditional conventions or traditions but forms one's own.

The Artful Transgressor: One who goes beyond the limits of moral standards, norms – based on rational and logical thinking.

Iconoclast: To look at things and life from alternative perspectives to establish egalitarian perspectives, to set plurality of perspectives.

Fabulist: One who remakes and recreates fables, myths, legends, fairy tales using fantasy – a technique of defamiliarization; deeper structures, designs, patterns, contrivances – "because the fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of cultures; that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent" (qtd. in Vijayasree 26).

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POETRY

Only a Tribute

Today really is a great day for me What a great personality really was he!

As his rickshaw entered the gate All the onlookers praised their fate.

He always wore an air of modesty That too enhanced his personality.

With smile, responded everyone's salute Taught his subject with attention minute.

Everyone looked forward to his class He entered his class with an aura of flash.

An eloquent like him is difficult to find Pindrop silence capturing every mind.

He charmed the class with typical gesture Even the most unruly would never venture.

Gleefulness reigned every pupil's face Working attentively as minds in a chess.

Whatever I am is only due to him Who will forget the brilliance of the beam!

The day he came 'dhoti-kurta' clad The unique difference made us very glad.

'He is no more' is quite unbelievable. Alas! To repay him, how can I be able? O God! What amuses you in creation and recreation! For exclusively talented, I pray for reservation.

My 'Palit Sir!' be it the heaven or the Mars Wherever you are, life is totally a farce.

- Ayodhyanath Choudhary*

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Diplomacy

Wars begin When diplomacy fails Diplomacy is the fuse That delays war

We may shove our weapons
Under the carpet,
Hiding a dagger behind our backs
And, preach peace

But, when the uneasy calm Gives way To thunder and storm Peace yields to war

Peace oscillates
Between the yes-yes
And, the no-no's
Of crafty politicians

And, bureaucrats
Do the dirty jobs
For their political masters
Through diplomacy

Rising Temperatures

Cold wars
Turn into real wars
When the mercury rises

The ensuing war Is sure to add To the global warming

It is bad
For the countries involved
And the whole world

War is bad

Not only for the people

But also for the environment

So, it is in the best interest
Of the whole world
To freeze cold wars into peace

Defence Forces

All the nations Across the world Invest heavily On military hardware

And, they recruit
The most able-bodied men
And women into
Army, Navy, and Air Force

They claim
That these are
The defence forces
Of their nation

But, if all the nations Have only defence forces Where is the question Of war?

The Peace Within

Peace Is not something That you can

Buy in the market

Or,

Produce

In the factories

Of the outside world...

Peace

Comes

From within

Not without

There is a peace mill

Within all of us

When we find it

We discover the peace within

World War

Disputes erupt

Between two individuals

Or, communities

Or, states

Or, countries

They are best

Settled between

The two parties

If we involve others
And, others join in,
There is every possibility
That it might
Snowball into a world war

-Vincent Van Ross*

^{*}Mr. Ross is a freelance journalist and writer. Many of his Hindi and English poems have appeared in national and international anthologies and various websites. His articles and features have appeared in most of the newspapers in India. He lives in New Delhi, India. Email: vincent2vanross@gmail.com

Table Scraps

There is no atonement, reparation for causing casualty or extinction.

The cook thought no harm, and so tossed the ham, catfish, and leg bones.

The guests were startled by how close the caiman came, familiarity and name.

They laid down near the caiman and captured intimate portraits of its eye.

No one expected so small a caiman would turn behemoth, a rogue.

Eat a dog. Terrorize guests at night by lunging and snapping jaws.

Shadow and stalk. Tear flesh from a young woman's leg like wet paper.

Leave the woman halfalive, struggling to survive, clinging to the dock.

There is no atonement, reparation for causing casualty or exigency.

The men make a noose from a rope and ask the cook to bring more bones.

There is no atonement, reparation for causing casualty or extermination.

A Charm

Helmeted manakins are part of Amazonian superstition and are often killed and used as charms.

Upon finding her on the nest, name her a living charm, not hatched in a pocket or hung dangling from thatch. Abandon collections, superstitions, and talisman. Wish the whole universe could struggle at first to see, then lock onto her green iridescence, and oo and ah. Whisper so quietly, look how she's glued the leaves like little scraps of paper. Her eye, her eye. Her nest seems to be a handmade hat. Or a pistachio ice cream cone. She's camouflaged so well no one knows where leaf ends and bird begins.

The Flora of Metaphor

Camalotes are floating beds of vegetation found in both the Amazon and Pantanal.

The jaçaná's feet splay; he seemingly walks his way on water like an illusionist, like Christ. He fishes

poorly like a disciple, tends his aquatic garden in stilted heat, deterging and purging pests, sidestepping perils.

When the banks crest, the camalotes unanchor, drift like errant botes, spun by ebb and eddy.

Underneath, stowaways latch; above, insects hatch in the hyacinth scraps and a cocoi delicately scratches.

At the bend, the floating islands accumulate, wedge, and form an impenetrable mass, a soggy moquette,

a green raft, a lettuce salad, a Brillo pad, a flat dam, a mat of uncountable neurons, an impressionistic painting.

Camalotes are transients, continents, plate tectonics shifting with each hour, each day, faults and rifts

and crevasses forming, land masses slamming, advancing and retreating; meaning slips underfoot.

Tick, Tick

Black caracaras, cattle tyrants, shiny cowbirds, and rufous horneros are tick-eating birds of lowland tapirs.

Most ticks bunker, hunker under out-of-reach patches, folds of unscratched skin.

Tiquetaque, tiquetaque, the tapir rubs and sloughs: a few ticks burst with blood.

Parasites do not make good mothers. At dusk, her young follows the white tips of her ears.

She teaches her stillness in the broken light keeps jaguars and poachers away.

Forays into water, nibbles of new leaves, plucking ripe fruit with her flexible trunk,

waddling on the muddy bottom, breathing with her snorkle, sniffing the wind for trouble,

allowing tyrants and horneros to clean, glean, and peck her back, harvesting, tiquetaque, tiquetaque.

The Magician

His tricks are legendary: escape from certain death by flinging himself twenty meters into a muddy river; drop a tail and let it squirm when caught; molt a coat of arms, sit so green, so cryptically, so hypnotically the audience misses him.

The parietal eye notes light and dark shifts, knows when a raptor descends, parts clouds, rips air, and seeks to rend. Now, threats come from beneath: collectors with nets and poachers with rifles. This is his final trick, his last hurrah. Presto. Chango. Poof. He disappears.

Naughty

Grabbing more than they should, never listening,

glistening in the dappled light, capuchins act impishly,

prankishly, like naughty children given free reign

at the playground. Dropping sticks, stealing my fruitlunch,

scampering behind, above me, I whirl and step deep, water

gushing and sloshing boots, tripping over exposed roots.

The monkeys yap, clap, slap branches, quickly evaporate.

I am spinning in a tight circle, laughing hysterically, speaking

to the wind again, scolding only myself for this foolishness.

- Paul Brooke*

^{*}Professor of English, Grand View University, 1200 Grandview Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50316, USA. Email: pbrooke@grandview.edu

Morning

Born on a reserve, I moved to a city
my soul stuck there
the body followed the brain.
It is so dark here.
My morningbiologically calibrated in the Mountain Times
yet to adopt Eastern Zone,
the soft sun
hides behind the tall Condo buildings.

I contemplate the orange-red sun with thousands of rays peeping through the mountains. The lake here is breezeless, stagnant as the city is.

I miss the rising tide at the bay invigorating the men and women to take a bumpy ride near the shores.

The morning is dull here.

Disappearing Thought

Thought skitters beyond my reach I can follow it for a while through the transparent glass window.

The train enters a tunnel dark, deep.
The wheels beat up the rhythm of emptiness.
Co-passengers unshaken,
I grieve my loss.

– Dharmpal Mahendra Jain*

^{*}Born (1952) and raised in tribal reserve of Jhabua, India, Dharm is a Toronto based Author. He writes in Hindi and English and has five published books in Hindi-three collections of satirical essays and two collections of poetry. He is a columnist for two prestigious journals Chanakya Varta and Setu. Most of his work has appeared in prestigious Hindi journals across the world. He is currently working on a full-length collection in English. For more on Dharm, visit: www.dharmtoronto.com. Email: dharmtoronto@gmail.com

IFLAC Magical World Peace Congress in Peru, Chimbote (2021)

We embrace you smiling, Congress of Peace, In Chimbote, in Peru, In which you are creating a Global Peace Village Where not one gun is fired, Not one tank or one bomb remains.

You strengthen democracy and spread
The power of people for peace.
Global poverty has already been cut in half
However, in the Global Peace Village
You will banish war and poverty altogether.
Never before have ordinary people
Had more power to solve conflicts
And to decide their own fate.

We're poised on the edge between
Our oldest fears and deepest dreams
We face a choice – and we rise
To the message of this hopeful Congress
And throw the War monster out of our lives.

We IFLAC peace marchers are bringing hope And hope is the war- game changer. Hope is the wing on which we rise And the Congress is the map Of how and where to fly.

We fly straight to the peace lovers of our world
Who are the largest global community,
They will embrace the message of
This wonderful Chimbote IFLAC Congress
And will magically end the game of war and terror.
We salute you and adopt you as our cherished treasure
Great Peru IFLAC Congress in Chimbote.

- Ada Aharoni*

*Prof. Aharoni is IFLAC World President and lives in Israel. Email: ada.aharoni06@gmail.com

Martial Law prompted by Henry Howard's translation (1545) of Martial's "*Happy Life*" epigram

Martial, the things that do attain the happy life be these I find the simple preferred in the main

the less said even more to gain then friends do not feel left behind Martial, the things that do attain

the local, not the express train frequent stops bring pleasures to mind the simple preferred in the main

balm offers to lessen the pain rubbed gently with melon rind Martial, the things that do attain

having doubt need not be profane if doubting your doubt intertwined the simple preferred in the main

my years have passed, fewer remain still infinite time to be kind Martial, the things that do attain the simple preferred in the main

1170 Murder of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral

The breaking of so great a thing should make a Greater crack.

Anatony and Cleopatra, Act 4, Scene 1, William Shakespeare

the breaking of so great a thing should make a greater crack a bishop falling to a king

much turbulence dost Becket bring just a "low-born cleric" the breaking of so great a thing

four black knights knelt and kissed his ring then planned their dire attack a bishop falling to a king

four royal Harris hawks take wing descending swoop – thwack ... whack the breaking of so great a thing

upon sore shoulders pilgrims sling provisions in a sack a bishop falling to a king

to Thomas Becket poets sing Believers flock to buy a plaque the breaking of so great a thing a bishop falling to a king

- Neal Whitman*

^{*}Dr. Whitman lives in Pacific Grove, California, USA where his poetry is inspired by walking along the Monterey Bay recreation trail. Email: neal.pgpoet@gmail.com

You and I

Looking at the roaring sun-burnt sea
I keep my eager touch on my familiar trusted hand,
I held thirty years back.
The red, blue, purple, green rains poured on me,
I tiptoed backward to memory lane.
Time ran by and we too have rushed
Lustful youth fades in graceful old age
Thirty years back, hand in hand
You and I set out for a voyage.

I look at you, my veteran companion
Sun touches your gray hair, your fatigue wrinkles,
A time-tested relation we do have,
Your smile takes me to the inception!
Adorable skirmishes, serious fights,
Countless sleepless nights, all dwindle...

Thirty years have passed...

Our dazzles have died down to a serene passivity,

We lay side by side like a deserted railway track,

Feeling each other, complementing each other

A companion, a friend, a partner....

We seldom speak now, just exchange words,

But, internal reciprocation is eternal.

Only at times the petrifying thought

Prevails over everything, "What if anyone dies".......

My shivering palm fall on your bosom, "Alive, aren't you? Please don't cease, Each of us needs this warmth more To feel that we are alive!"

- Taniya Chakraborty*

*Dr. Chakraborty is an assistant professor at Dr. B C Roy College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences, Durgapur. She is a bi-lingual poet writing in Bengali and English. Her works of literature are published in many journals and on her website: www.sanjhbaati.com. Email: taniyavirgo26@gmail.com

Evocations

I saw her in the moon last night,
Ornamented in overwhelming marvel,
Mother was conversing with a gleaming galaxy,
Tears unremitting, free-flowing like the Nile and Euphrates.

From my window, with the edge of my blanket
Forlorn, I reached out high to wipe Mother's teary face.
Alas, my upraised hands could not reach her; my heart aches,
I have so often, desperately, prayed for you - Oh dearest Mother.

She stands tall from Cape Town to Cairo
See her alluring golden Sahara dunes? Behold
Her long-long Nile, deep Congo and Kasai Rivers,
The boisterous great River Zambezi and Victoria Falls
See? Notice her luscious jungles and Egyptian pyramids.

Behold my marvelous Mother, Africa! See her?

Offspring-regaled; arrayed in unspeakable grandeur,

Standing tall and overlooking her numerous progenies.

Her beautiful long and slender ebony arms open wide-wide,

Stretching from Banjul to Djibouti, watching over her children.

She flagrantly sprawls across her verdant trees.

From her eye-level around Khartoum, Mother-Charming,

Looks down southeast of Nigeria, her mysterious warm gaze

Settles on the serene Okwaraeleke River in Abba, the river twirls
She audaciously inserts herself amidst the early morning brilliant stars.

I see you, inviolate ubiquitous Mother Africa!

Nurturer of multitudes, ever guiding, protecting, I make splashes of joy over her waters, she watches. Incomparable mother, shepherding me from drowning, Steering me away from being sucked into the coy gamely Poetry 133

Yawning bowels of the desirous ancient Okwaraeleke River.

There, you are! I see you in the skies, matchless Mother.

I salute you, great One. My Mother-Beautiful!

Forever standing tall in enigmatic ebony splendour.

– Clara Ijeoma Osuji*

^{*}Dr. Osuji holds a Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Lagos, Nigeria and teaches Literature at Augustine University, Ilara-Epe, Lagos. Some of her research papers and poems have been published locally and internationally, in journals and edited volumes. Her ongoing scholarly projects focus on Aging Masculinities and Contested Femininities. Email: clara.osuji@augustineuniversiy.edu.ng

INTERVIEW

Zafar Khan in Conversation with Rafi Mustafa

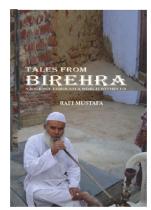
Dr. Rafi Mustafa is a Canadian national of Indo-Pak background, and a former Associate Professor of Chemistry at the University of Khartoum in Sudan and the University of Sindh in Pakistan. He was also engaged in postdoctoral research at the Universities of Toronto and Windsor in Canada, and the University of Leicester in England; at present CEO, Indusflow Systems, an IT company and author of *Tales from Birehra* (2020), a work of fiction.

Zafar Khan: Birehra sounds like an exotic name to many readers. Tell me why you chose Birehra as the centrepoint of your stories.

Rafi Mustafa: I was born in a village called Birhara in District Etah of Uttar Pradesh. I changed the spelling slightly to fictionalize it.

ZK: The subtitle of your book is "A Journey through a world within us." Is there any special reason for this subtitle?

RM: Birehra is a fictional village where everyone of us would like to be born, grow up, and spend the rest of our lives. We all have our own Birehra, where life is simple, and people are loving. They want to keep living the way they have



always lived and don't want anyone to change them or judge them. Likewise, they do not have any desire to change anyone or judge anyone.

In Birehra, every day is just like any other day; children play in the street, farmers plough their fields, and women spend all day doing housework. They have simple problems with simple solutions. So this is Birehra! It is a place where little things make one happy. It is not like we need big things to make us happy, and every little problem looks like a mountain to us. In other words, Birehra is a world within us in which we would want to spend the rest of our life.

ZK: You have called Birehra "a timeless globe," and the very first part of the book reveals your nostalgia for Birehra. Do you still miss this fascinating place?

RM: I have called Birehra a timeless globe because it has no past and no future. Even though nights follow days and days follow nights, there are births and deaths, love and betrayal, fights and reconciliations, but time stands still, and every event occurs in the eternal present.

Of course, I miss Birehra, I mean my birthplace, but I know that it does not exist anymore, at least not the way I remember it. Time can be made to stand still in our nostalgia, but not in reality. That is why I have built my own Birehra.

I have never been to India, and some friends have asked me over the years if I would like to visit my birthplace. My answer is always negative, and the reason is that when you migrate from your birthplace, you take a snapshot of it and put it in your pocket

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over your heart. Then you take it out of your pocket to look at it from time to time. You are happy that it is still there the way you had left it. If you go back decades later, you will be shocked to find out that it is not there anymore.

ZK: Your book has a historical perspective as it highlights some important events of India's freedom struggle. How did you combine the world of the socio-political reality of colonial India with the world of fiction? Did it involve a lot of research?

RM: I tried to avoid history as much as possible, but I had to bring the historical background into the story to set the perspective, especially for the Western reader. The biggest challenge for a writer in bringing history into fiction is that history is inherently biased, and I believe that bias should not enter the realm of fiction. If my agenda is to convey a message to my reader, I better write history so that I can afford to be biased.

I am not sure how far I have succeeded in presenting an unbiased account of India's partition. It is up to the reader to judge that. However, I do not have any reservations in admitting that whatever I have said about Partition is my personal opinion. You know that opinions are just opinions; there is no point in refuting them or debating over them.

I have avoided the gory details of the bloodshed associated with the event; it all happens in the background. Secondly, there is no significant villain in the story. The villain who caused all the upheaval in Birehra turns out to be a young, educated man who follows his ideology. I have tried to present his viewpoint as honestly as possible, and at no point does a reader feel hatred for him. I received a comment from a reader who said that it is difficult to judge whether this writer is a Hindu or a Muslim. I feel that it was the best comment I have received about this story.

ZK: When there was an outbreak of Bubonic plague in India's urban areas, the people of Birehra were celebrating Khansab's birthday. Does it mean the people of Birehra were leading a happy and peaceful life, defying the religious division of being Hindu or Muslim? Were mutual love and respect norms of the day?

RM: The culture presented in this book is popularly known as *Ganga-Jamni Tehzeeb*, which flourished in Northern U.P. from the Mughals' days. It represented the comity of Hindus and Muslims, whose friendship and the association had blossomed from generation to generation, and they respected each others' religions and values.

I remember my grandmother telling me that God had sent 124,000 prophets worldwide to educate people, and Prophet Muhammad was the last one of them. She said that we should not be disrespectful to Rama and Krishna or Buddha because they could also have been God's messengers.

The characters in *Tales From Birehra* are Hindus and Muslims. They are involved in each others' lives and share each others' joys and sorrows.

ZK: Sherwanis were Pathans of Afghan descent. Khanum, Sherwani sahib's mother, could not imagine a woman belonging to the untouchables caste would breastfeed her grandson. Does it show that the Hindu caste system had an impact on the Muslim psyche?

RM: When early Muslim invaders came into India, they did not assume Indian identity; instead, they took pride in their Persian heritage. The term *Ashrafiyah* or *the Gentle People* represents that class of people; they were given land to cultivate and became landowners. The Sherwanis in Birehra belong to the Ashrafiyah class. In the neighbouring village, Nagla, we have Hindu landowners; they are mostly Brahmins who take pride in their Aryan heritage and are the Hindu version of Ashrafiya. The rest of the people, Hindus or Muslims, are ordinary people who work in landowners' fields. One common trait that the landowners have is their fair skin colour which makes them superior to the rest of the people who are dark-skinned. Such colour discrimination was prevalent among the Ashrafiyah in U.P.

The Sherwanis have an issue reconciling their religion with Indian tradition; on the one hand, they are not supposed to discriminate based on colour and caste and, on the other hand, they have to conform to the standards of the Brahmins of Nagla.

That is how caste and colour consciousness entered the Muslim society in U.P. Even Khanum is torn between her religion and what she calls her "Indianness."

ZK: In *Book Two: Paradise Lost*, your narrative takes a new turn. Suddenly, the storm starts gathering, and the peace and harmony of the Indian sub-continent, in general, is lost. People like Karmoo behave in selfish ways, and city life becomes more attractive. Does Karmoo's persona reveal the changing socio-economic life patterns due to the influence of western culture?

RM: I wouldn't consider Karmoo to be selfish. To me, he is a hero because he challenges the status quo. His father and forefathers have been serving the landowners in exchange for food and clothing. Karmoo breaks away from that slavery by moving to the city and becoming the master of his destiny. That was a courageous move. Come to think of it, his brother, the watercarrier, also rebelled and decided to charge for his services, but the landowners conspired to thwart his attempt, and he admitted his failure.

ZK: On pages 212 and 213, you have mentioned how Pundit Uday Lal's son Amrit was attending meetings secretly and inviting strangers to his house. Does it mean violence was their hidden agenda, and the signs of dissent from the Gandhiji's principles were visible?

RM: Amrit was not a follower of Gandhiji. He was influenced by the Arya Samaj movement and had developed his own ideology. According to his theory, the Muslim Ashrafiyah was a stumbling block in the path of bringing ordinary Muslims back to Hinduism. He believed that if the Sherwanis could be driven out of the village, it would be easier for his group to achieve its objective.

The Arya Samaj movement was inherently non-violent, but Amrit and his group did not find any issue with breaking a few jaws to persuade Khansaab's workers to stop working for him.

ZK: Do you think the British were responsible for robbing the Indian people of their traditional life of peaceful co-existence?

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RM: So much has been said and written about the exploitation of India by the British. Dr. Shashi Tharoor has said it all, and I don't think anyone can refute him.

ZK: In the Epilogue, it is evident that Azad has a tone of voice of this work of fiction. Azad's friends think he is at the crossroads of nostalgia and schizophrenia. Azad does not believe that Birehra is a mirage. For him, it is a fascinating reality. Do you share his views?

RM: Oh yes. Azad has spent decades travelling through the world and has been looking for his Birehra, but he does not find it anywhere. So he builds one himself, erecting mud walls with his own hands and raising thatched roofs on top of them so that every house is a duplicate of what he had left in Birehra; he puts the characters of his choice in every home, and engineers every event with utmost care.

As the book ends, Azad's friends think that he has schizophrenia and tell him that Birehra is just a mirage that he has been chasing all his life. He does not believe in mirages since he knows that every oasis, appearing on the far side of the quivering desert heat, is real. All that a weary traveller needs is the unwavering passion for reaching it. And that is where the book ends.

ZK: My last question is related to your passionate journey, beginning from a university professorship to being a CEO of an IT company, then a fiction writer. How did you enjoy and manage all these journeys? Was the journey from a world of reality to a world of fantasy full of challenges?

RM: They say that once you are a teacher, you are always a teacher. I left academia effectively in 1978, but I still lecture in my dreams. By the way, those dreams sometimes turn into nightmares when I come unprepared in the classroom. Apart from making a living, I have also been associated with the International Development and Relief Foundation or IDRF for the past 35 years, as a board member, as a past president, and now as a member of the Advisory Council. IDRF is a Canadian charity that funds development and relief projects worldwide, especially in South Asia. So, that has kept me busy all these years.

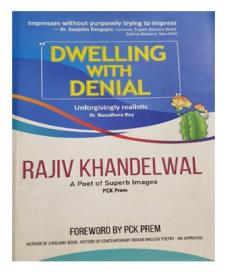
As far as the journey from reality to fantasy is concerned, I feel that there is no escape from reality. When you write fiction, your characters are very much real. You have met them somewhere in your life or have heard about them. Sometimes, a character is a composite of several characters you have come across. Similarly, the events described in fiction are based on actual events. One advantage that fiction writers have is that they can lie through their teeth, and no one would challenge them because, after all, it is fiction.

Rajiv Khandelwal. *Dwelling with Denial*. Gurugram: The Poetry Society of India, 2020. pp. xviii + 130. HB. Price: ₹320, US\$ 29. ISBN: 976-93-89213-19-5.

Reviewed by Vijay Kumar Rov*

Dwelling with Denial is the fifth collection of poems by Rajiv Khandelwal. It contains 75 poems and many comments on his poetry by the practicing poets. The "Foreword" is written by P. C. K. Prem and "Preface" by Sanjukta Dasgupta. Khandelwal chooses ordinary themes for his writing that have practical implications in human life. He writes on social, religious and political issues giving messages of familial ties, unifying forces and his poetic process. He does not write in elevated style.

The title poem of the book has very important messages for the modern society. The poet writes about extravagance that takes



place in "weddings", "Births", "Deaths", "Religious meals" all in the name of "social obligations". In many cases these "obligations" cause unrepayable debts to the people for generations. "The unwritten accumulated outstanding loans" "handed down" "by succession" make them live in a "denial" life. The poet shows their suffering in these words:

Sans sanitary conditions
Hungry stomachs
Live a life worse than animals
For in our world, only animals
Are free to hunt around

For eatables when ravenous ("Dwelling with Denial", Lines 24-29).

At the same time the poet writes about the rich people whose "Irregular and unpredictable incomes" help make the "social obligations" grand success.

The sensitivity of the poet is also vindicated in the poem "Destination": He writes:

In sweltering heat
With the hot softened tar

Sticking to his soles
And searing his skin
As if he embraced the pain (5-9).

In the poem "The Debt", the poet discusses the "debt-bonded-labourers" who are "the poorest of the poor /With chronic and dire economic needs" (1-2). The suffering of these people is unlimited. They are "Vulnerable / Voiceless /Denied of human rights" (11-13) being

... trapped to do donkey work
With or without pay
Or just, for some unwholesome food
To pay interest on debts
Taken ages ago
Or for credit taken now for daily family needs ("The Debt" 5-10).

The pain of the miser is different from the pain of the poor people so the poet does not want to glorify them because such people keep themselves away from "happiness" willingly ("Miser").

Modern age has distanced people from one another emotionally. Everybody is busy in their own business. Many incidents prove that people are emotionally dry, particularly in big cities. The technologically advanced age has almost usurped feeling, and emotional attachment of the people for others and even for their relatives. What human qualities were naturally acquired in families that have become the subject of teaching at educational institutions now. Then also in almost all professions unfortunately ethics is disappearing. It is so because it is not taken seriously in family these days due to dominion of materialism. These days nuclear family has become a trend. Nobody likes joint family. In this situation value inculcation has become a challenge. In his poems, Khandelwal writes about his feelings and emotions for his relatives and dear ones that are praiseworthy. The poem "Wandering Thoughts", addressed to his daughter, ends with beautiful lines: "These are not words that every husband tells his wife / But it's quite like a blind person's yearning for eyesight" (44-45). "Dear Mate" is a celebration of 60th birthday of poet's wife. The poem "Happy Birthday Son-in-law" shows how much importance the poet gives to his relatives. The poem, "Mother in Our Joint Family", addressed to his mother, has the values that the poet wants "the daughtersin-law" to learn in order to keep the family peaceful and united. "Preschooler's Conversation with Granddad" is a beautiful poem full of fragrance of innocence. In conversation, the child utters about illness of his/her grandfather (Nana): "For when I put my fingers on his face / He was hotter than the milk / Mom makes me drink" (10-12). The poem, "Pleasure", on grand children has "peak of pleasure" to the poet. The "Hilarious" and "Screaming outbursts" of grandchildren give "Life's most rewarding daily experience" to him. Besides the above poems of hope and happiness, "A Tribute to the Maternal Uncle" is a poem about "silent tears."

In the name of modernity many changes have taken place in society and often some of them become subjects of discussion in media as well as in society without reaching the common agreement. The poem "Pleading in a Dubai Club" echoes similar concern. The poet does not like "loud deafening music" and "full-throated conversations." Through the expression of "slit jeans competing with beggar's clothing" and "slim thigh-fitting pants" "All subconsciously clothed for sexual signaling", the poet has tried to mirror the society.

"Guilty" is another important poem in this collection full of reflection on social, cultural, and religious issues. Faith, blind-faith, selfishness all are so mixed in the minds of so called modern people that they are unable to differentiate between them easily. Instead of true devotion to God in all respect, they believe in sanctified offerings (*prasad*) in temples on different occasions. It is said that "God exists in men, women and child" then also people do not try to have good relations with each other and for everything they "go to temples". The rich and the poor, the honest and the dishonest all go to temples. Yes, frequency is more of those who believe in blind-faith and are away from the message of Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* about karma. This situation has given birth to many social evils. The poet writes:

Temples are the places
Where in their interiors
Fulfilment of all wants
Desires
Due-undue favors
Are shamelessly solicited ("Guilty" 14-19).

Not only these, even after functioning of numerous temples in every corner of the country, "social apartheid" is still present: "A thirsty child / On the basis of caste / Is not allowed to drink water" ("Guilty" 27-29) and eat with those of so called upper caste people. The poet brings to light the caste system, the worst social evil.

Like the poem "In Rain Forests", "Call You Later" is full of similes. The latter has also romantic experience of the poet. As the title of the poem suggests, the poet does not want to receive a call as he knows through 'Truecaller' who is calling him. He writes: "Surprise swelled like a sponge / Delight flashed over face, like sunshine / Over mood dark as soot" ("Call You Later" 4-6). The "second ring" was "Like the whisper of a sleeping child" (10) and from "The third ring" his "Emotions sprang like sparks from an anvil" (12-13). Carried away in a world of dreams, he receives the fourth call. It was "Satisfying to the mind as water to thirsty lips / Came like the bride carrying thoughts of budding love / Flaunting her pre-wedding henna adorned palms" (18-20). There is a similar tone of joy in the poem "When She is Around". For the poet,

The sound of her voice Her facial features Her youthfulness

Her curves

All a magic ticket

A spy-hole into dreams ("When She is Around" 15-20).

"The Sun Will Never Set" is a beautiful love poem in which the poet writes that his love is like the love of Dante for Beatrice. Beloved has been the popular character in poems, and love for one's beloved has been often seen in the poems but Rajiv Khandelwal describes his love for his wife. He writes, "Getting a wife like you is indeed an exceptional benefaction / An act of divine intervention" (19-20). He does not get tired admiring his wife using many adjectives. She is his "life-blood". He writes, "Chances of getting a wife like you were one in a million / For me, you are tailor-made, that's my conviction" (38-39). There are two more poems on his wife, "My Wife – My Lifeline" and "My Wife", full of adoration. Some lines need to be mentioned here:

My wife is like the advertisements

The newspapers need to survive ("My Wife" 1-2)

She is like the oxygen-mask

To respiratory distressed fliers (14-15)

In my life

She is the cloud

Without which there can be no rain (19-21).

Such strong love has divine force. It comes through emotion and develops spiritual thought that helps one to live happily and peacefully in this world.

Unethical acts of the modern media houses – both electronic and print – also draw attention of the poet. Such acts are well known to the people now. Working in favour of the ruling political party has become a trend. Many television anchors act like spokespersons of the ruling political party. This lack of professional values has diminished the image of Indian media that is known as the fourth pillar of democracy. According to "The World Press Freedom Index 2020", India ranks 142nd out of 180 countries. This is, of course, an alarming state as far as democracy is concerned. But due to political reason citizens are kept divided so that the real flavour of democracy should be suppressed from all corners. The poet has hinted about it in the poem "Resume" by saying that "modern media" has created 'divides' in society for the sake of political vendetta. The poet is unhappy seeing it common these days that some people have duel faces. He writes, "We are looking for a beast in attire of a gentleman" ("Resume" 27).

To satisfy the government and propagate their agenda media houses have divided the people from all social strata. One who writes or speaks against the government, he/she is projected as anti-national, a widely used term in recent years. Many such people have been put behind bars in fabricated cases so that others must not raise any question. Casteism and religious bigotry are dividing forces that help them vomit venom to keep the society divided for their personal and political gain. False nationalism

has become their vehicle to achieve all predetermined goals. These are some of the reasons for rise of a class of people who are always thirsty for blood of all those who do not agree with their ideology. Mob lynching is its worst example. Many cases of it have been reported throughout the country and many people have been killed but no strong action has ever been reported against the culprits so far. The poet is worried about this condition and expresses his views in the poems "The Lynch Faith" and "Love Wriggles".

Use of alcohol causes many evils. After drinking it, people commit crimes that they might not do without taking it. Using a number of similes, metaphors and some other literary devices the poet brings to light those evils through the poem "Grandmother". "The Poem Unborn" portrays the pictures of present situation of society wounded by 'political' vendetta, 'corruption', 'conflict', 'rape' and 'terrorism'.

The poem "The Visitation" is a mirror of society. Through this poem the poet has shown the real and painful picture of the underprivileged people who suffer a lot. There have been many heart-rending cases in different corners of the country due to irresponsibility of government agencies. A man "Carrying dead wife on shoulders / Walks ten miles / With unconsolable teen daughter" (6-8) due to negligence of a hospital. Such incidents cause birth of poetry: "Then and only then / The thunderously pounding poetry / Spins away into misty cosmos" (19-21). There are a number of poems beginning or ending with the word 'poem' or 'poet'. Through these poems the poet throws light on the poetic-process.

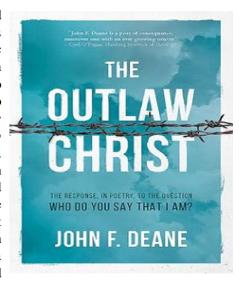
Throughout the book one thing is common that Rajiv Khandelwal is very concerned about society. He identifies many kinds of evils that weaken the thread of brotherhood in society and spoil it. He writes about his relatives, those who are alive and also about those who are no more. There is a passion for living relationship in his poems based on mutual respect and trust. There is also patriotic fervour in the poem "To the Pilots Who Visited Balakot". All the poems in this book are written in a lucid style that can be fully enjoyed. The book deserves to be recommended for reading and research purposes.

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John F. Deane. *The Outlaw Christ*. Dublin: Columba Books, 2020. pp. 313. PB. Price: \$12.99. ISBN: 978-1-78218-366-2.

Reviewed by James Lawless*

This work is based on a series of talks and lectures which John F. Deane delivered as Teilhard de Chardin Fellow in Catholic Studies at Loyola University, Chicago in 2006. It must have presented a challenge to the author to decide who to include and who to exclude based on the book's subtitle: The Response, in Poetry, to the Question: Who Do You Say That I Am? In his Foreword, Deane claims to limit his study to poetry in English. However, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Simone Weil, who are included, were German and French respectively. On that basis one could make a case for more than the scant reference afforded to such a powerful and universally acknowledged mystical poet as Saint John of the Cross. Not



all the commentary is written by the author. He intersperses essays by others, including work of some of his students, but regrettably the book lacks an index.

Deane tells us: "My study has been Christ: my living has been love and poetry", and in Loyola he claims to have shared the study of both together. Such a high-minded statement makes one wonder was there ever any doubt or wavering along the way. Deane's tenet is that based on our right relationship with a cosmic power, man will find his salvation. The problem there is with the semantics of the words, *right* and *salvation*, which could be interpreted as vague or theistically polemical. The religious message is foisted on one initially as he proffers his thesis with many biblical quotes, haranguing and too much presumption. Teilhard de Chardin is Deane's knowledgeable source and anchor to whom he frequently refers: "Teilhard knew [rather than believed] that divine love was at the heart of creation" (253). Such certainty allows little room for questioners in this scheme of things.

The author in fairness does admit later, quoting Bonhoeffer, that the church can have too much 'ballast' with too many rules and regulations and false hopes and consolations. And the author is more convincing when he is enquiring rather than asserting as in his chapter on the Waterford poet J. Pádraig Daly, and in particular his poem "The Last Dreamer" which claims that "our dream was flawed". "Wherein, then, lay the flaw?" enquires Deane. "Perhaps in that assumed certainly, a stiff and

persistent settling for dogma and ritual without a base of personal study and reading, a Church that demanded assent rather than thought and individual responsibility" (259).

Deane is particularly incisive when writing about the punning brilliance and authenticity of the poetry of John Donne: "These poems read like rehearsals for the real thing; they move like intellectual exercises, punctuated by a self-conscious wit.... Donne becomes a watcher on the battlements of himself." And aptly, in a world of global viruses, from *The Holy Sonnets*, Donne hints of Armageddon: "What if this present were the world's last night? But there are irritating repetitions in some of the author's rhetoric. Referring to Donne's poem "Hymn to God my God, in My Sickness" where Donne is preparing for his own death, Deane exclaims 'this is high seriousness to begin with, high seriousness..." and again, despite his pointing out that this poem is really delivering a sermon to himself, does he have to over-emphasise the point with the 'it is a warning' and again 'a warning', or use the cliché of what the poet must have felt 'in his deep heart's core?' There is also a questionable, suggested synonym where Deane extols the poet for overcoming 'his sensual and sinful self'. Surely the senses are fundamental to all of us, especially poets.

The author's argument of Christ as an outlaw or outsider (with whom he sees a parallel with a poet) is well made as evidenced from the Gospels where Jesus frequently challenged the status quo. And with George Herbert as a medium, Deane calls on a Christ of love rather than sacrifice: "The emphasis on love in spite of guilt already placed Herbert's Christ in the then invidious position of being outside and beyond the legal pretensions of the Church" (91). This makes for a convincing argument for Christ as an outsider or outlaw. He sat down and dined with the poor and sinners and maimed people, the outcasts of Jewish society, and, as Deane points out, was ostracised by the rich who refused to come to the wedding feast because they knew He would be there.

Deane's insistence that evolution and creation are not dichotomous is music to the ears of a religious doubter. But an attempt to fit evolution into the Christian pattern is a more difficult undertaking, and is stated rather than developed.

However, his arguments against a seven-day creation theory and the concept of original sin are well made. Following on de Chairdin's "every human body is made from cosmic dust birthed in the interior of ancient stars that long predated our planet and solar system" (253). Deane contends: "This does away with the old notion of humanity having to repay a debt from the Garden of Eden. It clears away the mist and dust of the old notion of "original sin", that we are all born inheriting the consequences and the guilt of sin, a notion originating with Saint Augustine and causing distress and negativity in Christian faith since Augustine's age" (253).

Another poet he gives a chapter to is the seventeenth century Hertfordshire poet Thomas Traherne. Although his poem "The Preparative" has echoes of Vaughan, for the most part, Traherne prefers to concentrate on the real world and the present moment and express himself in simple language devoid of 'curling metaphors,' and

'painted eloquence' to allow the soul to see its 'great felicity' and know the bliss to which it is heir. This, Deane maintains "chimes with the twenty-first century Christian awareness, that of our human destiny and that of all of Creation alongside us" (117).

One of the most refreshing poets Deane devotes a chapter to and which he rhapsodically hails as The Very Voice of God, is John Clare, the 'peasant poet'. Attuned to nature and the open countryside, Clare detested The Enclosures which were introduced into Britain in the early part of the nineteenth century to facilitate greater production with fenced-in fields and No Trespassing signs: "Each little tyrant with his little sign / Shows where man claims earth glows no more divine." (The Mores 7-8)

And Gerald Manley Hopkins who felt a great pang on the felling of an ashtree and who saw the world "seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil", could be declared the patron saint of the Green movement for, as Deane points out, humankind has a duty to care for the earth and be aware.

The reclusive Emily Dickinson, possibly as a reaction to her father's strict Calvinism, abhorred organised religion, and perhaps in a moment of self-pity deemed herself rather irreverently 'The Queen of Calvary'. She thrillingly makes use of dialogue in her attempt to get to know Christ: "Unto Me?' I do not know you - / Where may be your House?" (Poem 964,1-2)

And "The Word," a poem by the Welsh priest RS Thomas is also written in an honest enquiry, reminiscent perhaps of Beckett: "Enough that we are on our way; / Never ask of us where." ("The Word" 1-2)

However, it is James Harpur's wonderful pilgrimage poem "The White Silhouette" which perhaps best answers Christ's question, as it concludes in them agnificent lines:

My face becoming your face My eyes your eyes I you us I you us Iesus. ("The White Silhouette" 144-147)

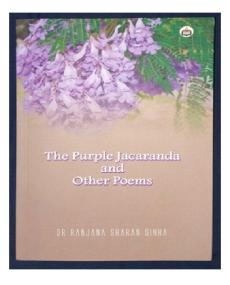
^{*} Mr. Lawless is an Irish novelist and poet. His latest novel American Doll is forthcoming from Propertius Press in 2021. His poetry collection is Rus in Urbe (2012), and he is the author of Clearing The Tangled Wood: Poetry as a Way of Seeing the World (2015). Email: jameslawless23@hotmail.com

Ranjana Sharan Sinha. *The Purple Jacaranda and Other Poems*. New Delhi: Authorspress, 2020. pp. 98. PB. Price: ₹295, US\$ 20. ISBN: 978-93-90155-43-9.

Reviewed by Vijay Kumar Roy*

The Purple Jacaranda and Other Poems is a collection of 53 poems by Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha. It begins with an excellent "Preface" with a brief history of written poetry "Dating back 4300 years" as "the most ancient record of human literature" (7). She discusses the epics of Homer, and comes to Aristotle, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and T. S. Eliot to give the background information of poetry. It helps the readers to remind of the evolution of poetry in "oral tradition" that has "a strong grip on human cognition and emotion" (7).

In this collection there are many emotional, educational, inspirational and moving poems that show exquisite craftsmanship of the poet actively cultivated through her long teaching



career. She uses a number of literary devices in her poems that make them so effective that readers go through the book without missing a single gem. The very first poem "A City of Strangers" justifies the title of the poem. The poet well describes a city, which is "A Janus-faced city" "once intimate" to her, particularly during her childhood. This city has changed now and looks like "a wasteland / Ravaged by uncertainty and solitude" (Lines 5-6). The third stanza of this poemis remarkable:

Unbelievable play of paradoxes –

Extreme noise . . . extreme silence!

Laughing through tears,

Crying through smiles,

Crazy faces with chaotic feet -

Where do they go? (15-20)

The poems "Silent Silhouettes", "Shades of Memory", "The Nostalgia of Train", "Myna Birds Outside T1 Terminal", "Alphabets", "Idols of Clay", and "The Purple Jacaranda" are also connected with her childhood memory full of "bliss", "puzzles" and "mysteries". Feeling all to be defeated by time, the poet is unable to forget the moments of journey by train when she used to "pass a bridge / Throwing coins into a

river" ("The Nostalgia of Train" 29-30). That lovely and exciting memory makes the poet wish for another childhood: "Ah, that once more I were a child!" ("The Nostalgia of Train" 39). Seeing a Myna, the poet finds,

overlapping symbols

The thrush of Wordsworth,

The Skylark of Shelley,

The Nightingale of Keats,

the worm-eater of Emily Dickinson:

Amid a kaleidoscope of birds,

Mynas outside the Terminal! ("Myna Birds Outside T1 Terminal" 40-46)

"Blooms in the Desert" is a touching poem. It has all the feelings of a "young disappointed mother" whose son suffers from autism. The same sensitivity of the poet is found in the poem "A Cold Capital" in which she describes the suffering of the "helpless destitute" in winter. They are homeless and take shelter on the roadside and many of them die. They are beaten by the policemen to leave their temporary shelters. It is a paradox that the poor face acute difficulties to save their lives and the rich enjoy expensive "red wine blends" with their friends. "The Black Silk Route" is also a sensitive poem about poverty. This poem is all about the children who live in 'mud houses' who are "created without a destiny!" (14). This poem is an attack on government schemes, programmes and constitutional rights that all are useless when after seven decades of Independence of India still there are poverty and inequality in society. The poet has well described the "Sick and sorrowful" condition of poor children:

Unfolding of year
made him struggle hard:
Too little food,
Long hours of work!
Poverty like a woodpecker
hammered into the
tender tree of his body:
Disadvantaged and
out-of-school the boy
suffered timeless traumas! ("The Black Silk Route" 15-24)

There are many woman centric poems in this collection that show the poet is an exponent of feminism. In the first poem "Mangata" the poet mentions the qualities of a woman that she is "Infinite, diverse, / magical, fierce, / and so much more!" (4-6). She is "indestructible" "Between the shores of / glory and misery, / Starlit dreams and / bitter truths" (19-23). She takes up "arms against / stubborn sorrows" (17-18) and "Like phoenix", she is able to fly "amid flames and / soar up to fiery heights!" (24, 27, 28). "Broken Accents" is a great poem about the condition of woman in Indian society in which she is not always safe. There are many cases of rape coming in the limelight

time to time that shake the whole country, still no better environment is created either by the society or the government. Victims do not get justice in all cases. The poet asks, "Is there hope for a new horizon?" ("Broken Accents" 23). "Sea Change" and "The Whirlpool" are also poems about the suffering and courage of women.

"Dream Girl", "Ode on Nangeli" and "A Tribute to Stri Shakti" are among the best poems of this collection devoted to the cause of women empowerment. In "Dream Girl" she paints a grim picture of a girl who is

Duped, sold and abused in a magic city full of lure, the girl quite often feels lost and devastated – That night she cried a lot before getting skimpily dressed and dancing to the beat.

No one knows the horrors the girl has endured; no one knows this is not her desired way of life – (17-27).

How a girl is trapped? How she loses her parents, her dream world, and everything of her life? How only 'darkness' prevails in her life? All these are real issues of our world forgotten one after another.

"Ode on Nangeli" is the best example of bravery and progressive attitude of the poet who has full faith in the constitution of her motherland that has provided equal rights to every citizen to abolish strongly rooted "cruel Brahminic patriarchy" and exploitative feudal system meant for suppression, torture, death and all kinds of inhuman practices against the weaker section of society:

The bitter twisted lies of history,

Can't annihilate her valorous sacrifice:

Against a cruel Brahminic patriarchy

A subaltern spoke in action amplified!

Visceral waves of loss and sorrow

For the avarna woman denied justice, ("Ode on Nangeli" 1-6).

This poem best describe the acute torture and hellish life of women of those days when "cruel Brahminic patriarchy" was at high peak. The second stanza needs to be fully put here:

The feudal days soaked in barbarism:

Lower cast women suffering public shame -

Forced to move without covering their bosom,

None but upper cast was to blame.

Heinous breast tax under law was imposed;

Women worked unable to break the cages,

As men gazed at their torsos naked,

Unfolding sagas of utter helplessness. ("Ode on Nangeli" 11-18)

This tragic world of women makes Nangeli "an incarnation of valour." Describing her bravery, the poet writes that Nangeli was "fierce-willed" who challenged that cruel patriarchy and covered her bosom "without the tax paying". She raised her voice against this system and gathered other women to protest fearlessly "with covered bosom". But Nangeli did not know that her last day had come. It is lively described by the poet at the end of this poem with full of grief:

Out came Nangeli from her mud cottage;

The revenue collector was demanding tax money:

The obnixious ogle and the monstrous visage

Gnawed through her human anatomy –

The ensuing pain and fit of rage

Made her act like a flash of lightning:

She cut off her breasts: men in a daze,

Stunned and speechless by the act frightening! (Ode on Nangeli" 31-38)

Footnote is important for the readers to know that "Nangeli was an outcaste woman who cut-off her breasts to protest castebased breast-tax in the early 19th century. She belonged to Cherthala (Kerala)."

The poet not only brings to light the inhuman practices of society in her poems, she also sings the glory of ancient India. "A Tribute to Stri Shakti" is its example. She thanks Mary Wollstonecraft, who is credited with 'quest' for feminism "in the west". But at the same time the poet says that for Indians this concept is not new as "Our glorious heritage of strong women / Existed much before feminism began" ("A Tribute to Stri Shakti" 7-8). To clarify this claim, she gives examples of "Adi Shakti Durga" who has "aggressive images" and is "Unassailable on the lion of patriarchy" (16-17); "Sita" who "Went inside the womb of earth" because of "disgrace" (19-20). The Poet also gives examples of "Kali", "Parvati", and "Gargi" all to "Remove the tag of weak and vulnerable" (35) as associated with women.

"Facie Luna" is a love poem. The moon is compared with "gourangi Radha" and the "night sky" is compared with "shyam-varna Krishna", the former teasing the latter. The poet has portrayed a beautiful picture of love between both. Again the moon is compared with "Spring flowers". The metaphors used in the poem are remarkable. The last lines of the poem are brilliant example of spiritual union of Radha and Krishna:

The atramentous sky stamps his colour on her white cheeks –

From duality to oneness! ("Facie Luna" 22-25)

Modern technology also finds its mention in the book. The poet gives credit to Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms for making friendship even in this fast changing material world. Many forgotten childhood friends get connected through Facebook. This technology "Adds charm and happiness to life / At times which is fraught with strife." ("Alphabets" 13-14)

The pandemic created by the COVID-19 has changed the perception of people. It has brought many kinds of devastation that were not imagined. This collection has some heart touching poems on these aspects. "Fossilized Words", "Poetry: My 2.00 AM Friend", "Corona Crisis", "Pandemic to Poetry", "A Herculean Odyssey", "Wings of Hope", "Gods with Frail Bodies", and "Let There Be Light" all have the similar theme. In "Fossilized Words" the poet writes about the agony of people losing their dear ones. Everyday the news of demise of young and old, close and distant ones makes the poet 'dissolve' "Into a thousand / oceans of tears" ("Fossilized Words" 9-10). Night becomes difficult to pass. But the hope for the morning sun keeps her patience alive. The whole universe seems empty due to the grave situation caused by the pandemic. She feels other's suffering as her own and such feeling results in the great poetry:

Disillusionment, sorrow And loss of human beings, Float in the empty space Amid random rain of tears.

Images of sad human plight
Haunt in succession,
Jarring the fine strands of peace,

Making me restless: ("Poetry: My 2.00 AM Friend" 9-16).

There are "endless untold woes" of Hungry, bitterly hungry children Deprived of food and laughter, Frail, victims of malnutrition,

In the dark alleys of fate! ("Poetry: My 2.00 AM Friend" 29-32)

Through this poem the poet also means to say that it is poetry that develops universal values like "love and empathy".

Dr. Sinha's poetry is not only concerned with the human beings. She also feels sadness with "Stray dogs and hungry animals" who "Scout for tidbits in utter despair!" ("Corona Crisis" 7-8). Through the poem "Corona Crisis" the poet raises concerns with Nature: "It's a warning shot from Nature / To protect wildlife and biodiversity" in order to keep balance and save the humanity ("Corona Crisis" 21-22). "In expressible losses", "Quarantine and helpless echoes", and "Uncounted deaths" all due to COVID-19 shook the world ("Pandemic to Poetry" 6-8). Scientists tried their best to

bring "the protective shields!" (12) Besides the government agencies, a number of selfless help groups and NGOs supported the infected people by various means to save their lives. For the poet, this service makes one "Feel the beauty of being alive" one day "You'll find the sun rising!" ("Pandemic to Poetry" 25 & 32)

Among the sufferers, migrant workers were the worst ones. Their suffering is vividly portrayed by Dr. Sinha in one of her great poems in this collection, "A Herculean Odyssey". The "Seeds of hope" take the workers from their native place to big cities that got torn apart due to pandemic. With their "machine-like limbs", they "Determined to work in sun" and did not "rest in rain" all "to support families" but "The brunt of lockdown" made them "Hungry, homeless, jobless" (1, 3, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19). What was "Once their utopia" that "Enforced" them to return to "their villages" "on feet", "Hundreds of miles away!" (21-25). On television and social media very pitiable scenes of these migrant workers were seen who were,

Hoisting their children

On their shoulders

They wipe their tears -

They are not afraid

Of the deadly disease: ("A Herculean Odyssey" 27-31).

"Gods with Frail Bodies" is another great poem of this collection that throws light on the migrant workers whose worries came from all sides. They were "Dismissed by employers" and "Thrown out by the landlords". "The cities" became "their painful cages" (1-3). They were "Victims of men mean and heartless" (8). "The booming cities with tall buildings / Built from their labour and blood" brought "flood" of "sorrows" for them (13-14). "Many died during the arduous journey: / Brutally killed by speeding vehicles" but these were not concerns of anybody (33-34). Through their labour they turned the city into "an exalted paradise" but their tireless toil was not recognized at the time of need. The most remarkable point of this poem is that the poet treats those workers as "Omni present gods with frail bodies; / Ugly goddesses sans any adornment" (49-50). With her "folded hands" she pays "respect" to them.

There are many poems in this collection romantic in their "tone, temperament and content". The poem "Beyond a Blue Ribbon" is its best example:

I'm a wildflower:

Uncontrolled, untamed

in fantastic patterns;

boundless as the blue sky;

free as the roaring ocean! (4-8)

This is a metaphorical poem in which the poet writes that she doesn't need the "mercy of seasons: / Summer can't burn / winter can't crush, / spring can't pamper" her ("Beyond a Blue Ribbon" 19-22). But in another poem she accepts the law of nature which is "inevitable": "Age cannot be defied, / Pearls fallen from the string / Cannot be retrieved" ("Potpourri" 1-3). She believes that everything is subject to change: "Yes,

life is a fusion of / happiness and sorrow" ("The Moon and Jacaranda" 32-33). The "waning and waxing" "of the moon" give answer to "the enigma of human existence" ("The Moon and Jacaranda" 38, 45, 47).

As the title of the book suggests, it is a brilliant collection on the beauties of nature. There are many references of trees, flowers, rivers, tiny creatures and all that belong to natural world. The poet writes that "green shady trees", movements of leaves making sounds, "chirping of crickets" all "mingle with speaking silence" and give her "a deep happiness", reminding of the "mysterious Creator" ("The Road through the Woods"). The poet has discussed the names of flowers in a large number in many poems. The references of "Butterfly", "Wild flowers", "Spring flowers", "purple flowers", "cup-shaped / crimson flowers", "animating flowers", "desert flower", "blue rose" all bring her close to John Keats.

The last and title poem of this collection, "The Purple Jacaranda" is written in praise of "God's creation". It echoes Wordsworth's "The World is Too Much With Us". The poet is unable to go away from the rapturous world of Nature. Therefore, she writes, "I can't say goodbye" (20). The most remarkable point about this poem is that she not only loves the flowers hanging in their branches but also those that are fallen on the ground: "We picked up those fallen flowers / As if they were precious jewels" ("The Purple Jacaranda" 39-40).

Childhood memories, poverty, feminism, pandemic effects, and the beauties of nature are the main themes of the poems in this collection. They are highly charged. Written by a teacher-poet in a lucid style, the book is a very important addition to Indian English Literature. It has all worth to be read, enjoyed, and recommended for research purpose.

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